

PRÉCIS OF COMMUNICATIONS

BETWEEN

ENGLAND AND RUSSIA,



AFGHAN QUESTION.

"If without waiting receipt of despatch you can act at once on this information, result of such action communicated to me by telegraph may favourably affect negotiation mentioned in my accompanying telegram."

It is to be observed with respect to this telegram :—

1st. That it was a new thing that Russian agents should remain in Cabul.

2nd. That no occasion had hitherto occurred to ask the British Government to remonstrate as to the letters sent from General Kaufmann to Shere Ali, excepting in the one case to which I have referred at page 7 of this *précis*.

3rd. That the Government of India, in Lord Mayo's time and in mine, had never considered the correspondence that had passed as "an open breach of repeated pledges," and that Her Majesty's Government, although fully kept informed, had expressed no such opinion, although they had, between May and October, 1875, been called upon to review the relations between Russia and Afghanistan.

4th. That the former correspondence was carried on without any concealment—the messengers who conveyed General Kaufmann's letters had not remained at Cabul, and the Government of India did not suppose, and had no reasonable ground for supposing, that any "risk was run by the Ameer" by receiving such letters; on the contrary, he was assured by Lord Mayo that the letters proved that Russia entertained no ideas of aggression in Afghanistan, and I had constantly given him the same assurances, founded upon the information communicated to the Government of India by Her Majesty's Government down to November 19th, 1875, that they had unreservedly accepted those assurances.

5th. That the remonstrance had reference to another telegram, of the same date (September 16), relating to "a negotiation." This telegram is not given in the Afghanistan Papers, and the reference to it shews that other reports to Her Majesty's Government were made from time to time by the Government of India besides those given in the published papers. From the Afghanistan Papers it appears that a very strong letter had been sent by Lord Lytton to Shere Ali on the 8th of July, which I believe to have been the turning point of the negotiations with him. My opinion is that this letter, and the letter from the Commissioner of Peshawur to the Agent, of the 8th of July, which was also written by Lord Lytton, and which the Agent was directed to communicate to Shere Ali, made the latter believe that the British Government were determined to

break with him. General Kaufmann, on the other hand, in consequence of the attitude of the British Government towards Russia, may have been instructed that he need no longer adhere to the previous understanding between the two Governments as regards Afghanistan. This is confirmed by the news received by the Government of India from their Agent at Candahar, in his news letter for the week of the 9th of August, and from Lord Derby's letter to Lord A. Loftus of October 2nd, in which he says that it was reported that a Russian Agent at Cabul was instructed to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with Shere Ali. The report is not supported by any information given in the published papers.

F. p. 80.
A. p. 178.

On the 16th of September the Viceroy communicated to Shere Ali his acceptance of the suggestion made by the latter that the British Native Agent at Cabul should visit Simla to confer with the Viceroy, and this must have been the "negotiation" which was alluded to in the "accompanying telegram." The Viceroy evidently thought that some real mischief was brewing, and that a check might be put upon it by action from England upon Russia.

Lord Salisbury on the 22nd of September wrote to the Foreign Office that he concurred in the views expressed by the Viceroy, and was of opinion that "a remonstrance against General Kaufmann's proceedings should be addressed to the Russian Government without delay."

F. p. 79.

Lord Derby accordingly, on the 10th of October, communicated with Count Schouvaloff, who on the 12th received from Prince Gortchakow authority to give a categorical denial that General Kaufmann was intriguing at Cabul.

F. p. 80.

F. p. 81.

A correspondence also took place with the Russian Government on the subject. On the 2nd of October the Foreign Secretary wrote to Lord A. Loftus the following letter :—

F. p. 80.

"In my despatch to your Excellency of the 6th ultimo, I inclosed a copy of the Cabul Diaries received from the Indian Government.

"You will find at page 10 of those Diaries a letter addressed by General Kaufmann to the Ameer of Cabul, which appears to have been conveyed to its destination by an Asiatic agent, who still remains at Cabul, and it is reported from other sources that his instructions are to induce Shere Ali to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with the Russian Government as well as a Commercial Treaty.

"Although the tone and insinuation of General Kaufmann's letter appear to Her Majesty's Government to be undesirable, the letter itself does not contain any statement of a distinctly objectionable character. Your Excellency will address a note to the Russian Government, reminding them of their repeated assurances that 'Afghanistan is completely outside the sphere within which Russia may be called upon to exercise her influence,' and you will endeavour, if possible, to obtain from the Russian Government a written disclaimer

of any intention on their part to negotiate Treaties with Shere Ali without the consent of Her Majesty's Government."

Lord A. Loftus brought the remonstrance of the British Government before the Russian Government on the 12th of October. F. p. 82.

On the 13th, he reported that he had seen M. de Giers on the subject, who had informed him that General Kaufmann was at St. Petersburg at the time the supposed letter was written, but that he had asked him for an explanation on the subject. F. p. 82.

In the meantime a despatch was received from the Government of India, and communicated to the Foreign Office, giving their objections in full to the frequent missions of Russian Agents to Cabul. F. p. 83.

This despatch was communicated to Lord A. Loftus by the Foreign Secretary, with the following instructions :— F. p. 89.

"I take this opportunity of sending your Excellency a copy of a further letter from the India Office, inclosing copies of despatches from India, in which it is shown that General Kaufmann for many years past has been in the habit of keeping up a correspondence with the Ameer, a proceeding which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, is opposed to the understanding between England and Russia, which stipulates that Russia shall not interfere in any way in the affairs of Afghanistan."

On the 15th of November, Lord A. Loftus saw Prince Gortchakow and made the representations which he was instructed to make. F. p. 89.

"Prince Gortchakow replied that there was no Russian Agent at Cabul as far as he knew, and that General Kaufmann had merely forwarded a complimentary letter to the Ameer, as he was in the habit of doing on returning to his post.

"But," added His Highness, '*quand nous avons en main une baleine, je ne puis pas m'occuper des petits poissons.*'"

On the 4th of November, Lord Salisbury communicated to the Foreign Office the text of the communications which had passed between Shere Ali and General Kaufmann, on July 6th and August 27th, 1876, which were merely formal letters of compliment. F. p. 87.

On the 17th of November, Lord A. Loftus reported his interview with M. de Giers on the subject, in which the latter said :— F. p. 89.

"That there was no question of General Kaufmann entering into political communication with the Ameer of Afghanistan, nor was there the remotest idea of any Treaty engagements. The Agent was simply charged to deliver a letter of courtesy from General Kaufmann to the Ameer, which was an usual custom on his resuming the duties of his post, and as the Governor-General of a neighbouring State.

"To this I replied that he was not the Governor of a neighbouring State, inasmuch as the Khanat of Bokhara was still to be regarded as an independent State, and that I therefore considered it necessary that General Kaufmann should receive express orders from the Imperial Government to desist in future from sending Agents to Cabul and from entertaining political communication with the Ameer of Afghanistan."

"M. de Giers then informed me that the Imperial Government had received information, both from General Kaufmann, and through

the Imperial Minister at Tehran, that the Afghan Government were making great military preparations. He stated that 10,000 men were assembled at Herat, with 1,600 cavalry, all well-armed and equipped; that they were being constantly drilled and exercised, and that a cannon foundry was established at Herat capable of producing one cannon per day. From the information the Imperial Government had received, this armament was destined for an expedition against the Turkomans and against Merv.

"It would appear, from the report of General Kaufmann, that he was somewhat disturbed in mind by this reported expedition."

On the 1st of December, M. de Giers sent a reply to the note which Lord A. Loftus had addressed to him on the subject; in this he repeated the categorical denial of the accuracy of the statement that a Russian Agent had been despatched to Cabul, charged to negotiate an offensive and defensive alliance with Shere Ali. He said that—

F. p. 94.

"The letter of General Kaufmann contained nothing beyond a message of courtesy, and did not give evidence in any way of the existence of any political negotiation whatsoever between our authorities in Turkestan and those of Cabul."

And added—

"We learn at the same time that considerable armaments are taking place at Herat, in view of an expedition against the Turkomans of Merv.

"If these facts received any confirmation, they would constitute a direct infraction of the understanding of 1872, by which Great Britain engaged to dissuade the Ameer from any aggression beyond the zone recognized as being under Afghan dominion.

"The Imperial Ministry do not doubt that the British Government will employ all its influence at Cabul to prevent encroachments of this nature."

On the 15th of December, M. de Giers sent to Lord A. Loftus a letter from General Kaufmann, in the following terms:—

F. p. 95.

"Your Excellency was good enough to transmit to me, in your letter of the 8th October last, the translation of a note of the English Ambassador at the Imperial Court relative to a supposed Agent whom I was said to have despatched to Cabul, according to information received by the British Government, in order to conclude a Treaty of Alliance, offensive and defensive, and also a Treaty of Commerce.

"I consider it my duty to inform your Excellency that, since entering on my duties as Governor-General of Turkestan, my relations with Shere Ali Khan have been limited to interchanges of civility, and that I have never sent to Cabul either Agents or even a single Djigitte.

"My letters have always been sent, once or twice a-year, through the Ameer of Bokhara, who forwarded them to Cabul, or by a Djigitte of Samarcand addressed to the Chief of Balkh, who sent them on to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

"These communications had never any other character than one of pure courtesy, as your Excellency can convince yourself from the copies kept in the Asiatic Department.

"I have the honour, therefore, to beg your Excellency to be so good as to protest formally against the assertions contained in the note of the British Ambassador, which are completely without foundation.

"I deny that the source from which this entirely erroneous information may have been derived can have any authentic character."

It appears from the despatch from the Government of India of December 8th, 1876, that on the 19th of October, 1876, there was a Russian Envoy at Cabul who

F. p. 97.

received, on a ceremonial occasion, gifts of the same kind as the British Agent ; that he was still there on the 30th, and that another Russian Agent, with a letter, came to Cabul at the end of November.

Lord Salisbury on the 27th of January, 1877, reviews the answer of M. de Giers on the subject, in the following terms :—

“Lord Salisbury observes from these papers that the statement F. p. 99. that Russian agents have been sent to Cabul with the object of negotiating a Treaty with the Ameer is denied both by the Russian Government and General Kaufmann, and that it is asserted that the General's communications have been merely letters of courtesy sent through the Ameer of Bokhara.

“Lord Salisbury has received the assurance given on the first point with satisfaction, but he cannot accept as correct the general view of the correspondence taken by the Russian Government without referring to earlier communications ; it is impossible to regard as a mere letter of courtesy General Kaufmann's letter of February last, which contained a detailed account of the Russian conquest of Khokand with justificatory remarks of a suggestive character ; while as regards the allegation that the bearers of the different letters have not been Russian agents, but messengers employed by the Ameer of Bokhara, it is enough to observe that they have been viewed at Cabul in the former light, and treated accordingly. The fact that the character, both of the letters and of their bearers, is open to such misconstruction is, in Lord Salisbury's opinion, a sufficient reason for the issue by the Russian Government to General Kaufmann of orders to altogether discontinue his communications to the Ameer.”

And, on the subject of the reports that Shere Ali contemplated an attack upon his neighbours, said—

“No information has reached this Office, nor is there any reason to believe, either that the Ameer contemplates aggression on Darwaz, or that the preparations which have been for some time past in progress at Herat are in any way directed against the Turkomans of Merv. On this subject, however, the Government of India has been asked for information.”

The Foreign Secretary wrote to Lord A. Loftus F. p. 101. accordingly, on the 7th of February, and a formal note was addressed to M. de Giers in the same terms, on the 22nd of February.

M. de Giers had previously (February 14th) told F. p. 103. Lord A. Loftus that—

“The name given in the Cabul Diaries of the reputed Russian Agent was the same as that mentioned by General Kaufman, but his Excellency said that he was not personally employed by General Kaufmann, nor was he personally known to him. The letter of which he was the bearer had been sent by General Kaufmann to the Ameer of Bokhara for transmission to Balkh, from thence it was forwarded to the Ameer at Cabul.

“The agent in question was the mere bearer of a letter, was neither selected by nor personally known to General Kaufmann, and consequently was in no way authorized to assume the character of a Russian Agent or Envoy at Cabul.

“M. de Giers stated that he had sent a copy of the extracts from the Cabul Diaries which I had given him to General Kaufmann, and had observed to him that the assumed character at Cabul of a Russian Envoy by this messenger was incorrect, liable to misconception, and consequently to be guarded against for the future.” F. p. 102.

The formal reply of M. de Giers, on the 5th of Marh, 1877, to Lord A. Loftus's note relates that the F. p. 105. Russian Government had

“Felt ready to give, in the notes of the 10th November and the 13th December

105. 3rd 15th December, the assurance that Russia had not endeavoured to conclude any arrangement, commercial or political, with the Ameer of Cabul, and that the rare relations of our authorities in Central Asia with the latter had never borne any other character than one of pure courtesy, in conformity with local usages in the East. While now renewing these assurances, the Imperial Government hope the British Government will recognize that practically we have never swerved from them, whatever may have been the erroneous interpretations placed by the native Asiatic Governments on the communications of General Kaufmann, and whatever false importance may have been attributed to the method of transmission adopted by him. Misunderstandings on this subject were nearly inevitable, considering the uncertain character of the native populations of Central Asia, and their inveterate inclination to intrigue; the only effective way, in our opinion, of meeting this danger lies in the good faith and loyalty which, we are glad to think, will never cease to influence on either side, any interchange of views between us and the British Cabinet."

It will be observed that the Russian Government declined to admit the contention of the English Government that General Kauffmann's communications with Shere Ali were contrary to the understanding between the two Governments regarding Afghanistan, and declined to comply with the demand of the English Government that instructions should be given to General Kaufmann to discontinue those communications.

No notice appears to have been taken of this refusal on the part of the Russian Government.

F p. 110

On the 12th of June, 1877, Lord Salisbury sent to the Foreign Secretary a despatch from the Government of India of the 3rd of May, in which they wrote :—

"There can be no doubt that the communications between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali Khan exceed the requirements of mere exchanges of courtesy; and are regarded as something much more than complimentary by the person to whom they are addressed. The messages from General Kaufmann to the Ameer have not been despatched, as stated by the General (in his letter of the 9th November, 1876, to the Russian Foreign Office), only 'once or twice a year.' During the *past year they have been incessant*. The bearers of them are regarded and treated by the Ameer as Agents of the Russian Government, and on one pretext or another some person recognised by the Afghan Government as a Russian Agent is now almost constantly at Cabul.

F. p. 111.

"We desire to submit to your Lordship's consideration whether our own conduct would be viewed with indifference by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, were the Government of India to open similarly friendly relations with the Khans of Khiva and Bokhara; and if without actually making to them overtures of alliance, we addressed to those Princes frequent letters containing assurances of friendship, coupled with explanations of the policy we deem it desirable to pursue towards the States upon our own frontier."

Lord Salisbury did not suggest that any communication should be made to the Russian Government upon this representation from India.

F. p. 121.

On the 12th of September, 1877, the Russian Government complained of the passage through India to Afghanistan of an Envoy from the Sultan to Shere Ali.

M. de Giers stated to Lord A. Loftus—

"That the object of the Envoy's mission was to preach a religious crusade amongst the Mussulman population of Central Asia, and, through the Ameer of Afghanistan, to induce the Ameer of Bokhara to excite the populations of Central Asia to revolt against Russia.

"The Ameer of Bokhara, his Excellency observed, had proved a faithful ally to Russia, and the Imperial Government placed full confidence in him. But difficulties might arise in consequence of religious agitation between Bokhara and Afghanistan, which might compromise the friendly relations between those Rulers. It was, therefore, of importance that seasonable advice should be given to the Ameer of Afghanistan to abstain from any action which could endanger the peaceful relations of the two States.

"M. de Giers added that General Kaufmann had been instructed to be guided by the arrangements entered into between Great Britain and Russia in regard to Afghanistan, and to remain strictly within the limits of those arrangements."

On the 17th of October, Lord Derby replied to Lord A. Loftus:—

F. p. 122.

"With reference to your despatch of the 12th September reporting a conversation which you had had with M. de Giers on the subject of the recent Turkish Mission to Afghanistan, and the passage of the Envoy through India, I have to state to your Excellency that, at the request of the Porte, a Turkish Envoy to Afghanistan was allowed to pass through Indian territory, but that Her Majesty's Government have no reason to suppose that the object of his mission was to preach a crusade in Central Asia.

"Her Majesty's Government will continue, as they have hitherto done, to use such influence as they possess with the Ameer of Afghanistan to induce him to maintain peace with Bokhara."

On the 8th of March, 1878, Lord Salisbury sent to Lord Derby a further despatch from the Government of India shewing that a Russian Envoy still remained at Cabul.

F. p. 125.

It appears from this *précis* of the information contained in the papers presented to Parliament that the relations between England and Russia in regard to Central Asia became strained from October, 1876. On the one hand, the English Government found that far more frequent communications than formerly had been addressed by General Kaufmann to Shere Ali; they demanded from the Russian Government that those communications should be stopped; the Russian Government declined to comply with that demand; and the English Government did not press it. On the other hand, the Russian Government requested the English Government to advise Shere Ali not to agree to the proposals which they supposed would be made to him by the Sultan's Envoy to join in a Mahomedan war against Russia, and the English Government only replied that they would use "such influence as they possessed" with Shere Ali to induce him to maintain peace with Bokhara. This obviously was not the meaning of the Russian Government, and was practically a refusal to comply with their request, which, as in the corresponding case, was not pressed. In fact, the amicable understanding of 1875 between the two Governments was virtually at an end, in consequence of the course of events in Europe, which had brought England and Russia to the verge of war.

It is important to observe, here, that there is no evidence in the papers published by the Government

that Shere Ali had responded to the advances which it is pretty clear had been made to him by General Kaufmann, at any rate until the Viceroy broke with him in March, 1877, if afterwards. In October, 1876, the British Native Agent at Cabul was summoned to Simla. He stated that one of the reasons advanced by Shere Ali for declining to receive Sir Lewis Pelly at Cabul was

A. p. 181. "That a pretext would thereby be afforded to the Russians for deputing a similar mission to Cabul; that the circumstance of their having given assurances to the contrary would not stop them; that the Russians broke treaties at pleasure, were very pushing in their policy, and feared no one. The recent political history of Europe shewed that the English were unable to compel the Russians to adhere to treaties, and were equally impotent to arrest Russian aggressions. The Ameer was well aware that, sooner or later, Russia would attack Afghanistan, and this with ulterior objects; but that His Highness also knew that in such crisis the British would defend him in their own interests. His Highness does not suspect us of conspiring with Russia to his prejudice; nor does he suspect the British of coveting any portion of his territory, which, at the utmost, could not yield them more than a score of rupees worth of revenue, while it would cost them tenfold that sum to hold the country.) As to Russian Agents at Cabul, the Agent admitted that one had recently arrived at Cabul, and thence returned to Russian territory. Two Russian Agents were still in Cabul, but were, the Agent said, men of no consequence, and were not often honoured with interviews by the Ameer."

And that the Ameer regarded "the Agents from Russia as sources of embarrassment."

In a private conversation with Captain Grey, the Agent said :—

A. p. 182. "The Ameer is also keen upon having a *pied à terre* in British territory, whither to send his family and property when he clears for action with the Russians."

We now come to the more recent events which preceded the war with Afghanistan.

F. p. 128. May 22, 1878, (received 27th). Lord A. Loftus reports the formation of eight battalions of infantry reserves for the reinforcement of the Turkestan military district.

F. p. 130.
A. p. 226. June 7. Viceroy telegraphs report of impending visit of Russian Envoy to Cabul.

A. p. 226. June 19. Viceroy reports corroboration of mobilization of Russian forces in Central Asia, opening of road towards Afghanistan, and pressure on Ameer to receive important Russian Embassy. Reports not fully substantiated.

F. p. 131. June 18 (received 26th). Lord A. Loftus has heard of no fresh military movements since May 22. Force at Krasnovodsk reduced. Military projects in Central Asia suspended.

F. p. 130.
F. p. 131. June 24. Lord Cranbrook sends Lord Salisbury the Viceroy's telegram of June 7, for information, without remark, and on the 26th Lord Salisbury sends Lord A. Loftus a copy of it, and instructs him to endeavour to ascertain whether there was any truth in the report.

July 1. Viceroy telegraphs report of arrival of a Russian force of 30,000 men at Karshi; that on 13th of June an agent from Russia reached Kabul, and informed Ameer that the Russians intended to establish cantonments on the Oxus, which would bring them into immediate contact with Afghanistan; while numbers are evidently grossly exaggerated, the mass and concurrent testimony of reports regarding Russian movements is so great that we cannot altogether disregard them. A. p. 227.

(This despatch does not seem to have been communicated by Lord Cranbrook to the Foreign Office).

July 3 (received 11th). Lord A. Loftus reports the interview held on 2nd with M. de Giers. F. p. 132

"At an interview I had yesterday with M. de Giers I inquired of his Excellency whether any Russian representative was instructed, either by the Imperial Government at St. Petersburg or by the Governor-General of Turkestan, to proceed to Cabul.

"M. de Giers replied, that no such mission had been, or was intended to be, sent to Cabul either by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann.

"I observed to his Excellency that, for some time past, a Russian agent had resided at Cabul, and that intrigues had been apparently carrying on with a view to create dissensions between the Ameer of Afghanistan and the Indian Government. I stated that this course was not in conformity with the arrangement entered into between the Governments of England and Russia, and that if it continued it must inevitably produce results prejudicial to the good relations between the two Governments.

"M. de Giers replied, that there had been a moment when war appeared to be almost imminent, and that under those circumstances no doubt the military commanders conceived it to be their duty to take such measures as might be necessary and serviceable to their country. He denied, however, as far as he was aware, that there had been any intrigues with the Ameer of Cabul of the nature to which I had alluded. He admitted that he had sent M. Lakouline, the Russian Consul at Asterabad, to Meshed to watch the movements of Captains Butler and Napier, who were reported to be inciting the Turkoman tribes to hostilities against Russia. This was the only diplomatic measure he had taken.

"I stated to M. de Giers that Captain Butler was a mere traveller on his own account, and no agent of Her Majesty's Government, and that urgent orders had been sent to him by the Commander-in-Chief in India to return forthwith to his military duties.

"M. de Giers, who appeared to be well informed both in regard to Captain Butler and Captain Napier, stated that he was aware that Captain Butler had been recalled, but that nevertheless he had refused to obey the orders he had received, and was persisting in his intention to visit the Akhal tribes. He referred even to the letter which Captain Butler had addressed to certain Turkoman chiefs, of which his Excellency had evidently received copies.*

"I inquired from M. de Giers whether any expedition was intended, or was now being undertaken by General Llamakin against the Turkomans.

"His Excellency professed ignorance as to any such intentions, observing that it was frequently necessary to repel the attacks of those tribes, or to punish them for raids committed on Russian commerce.

"I finally observed to his Excellency that, at a moment when Europe was sitting in Congress for the purpose of maintaining peace, it was advisable to avoid anything which could disturb the harmony and good understanding between England and Russia (the two Asiatic Powers), in other regions where their mutual good fellowship and co-operation could render such valuable service to the cause of humanity and civilization."

July 10 (received 16th). Lord A. Loftus sends par-

* It appears from this that some negotiations had gone on between Captain Butler and the Turkomans.

particulars as to the formation in May of Russian columns in Central Asia.

F. p. 133. July 17 (received 22nd). Lord A. Loftus sends further particulars.

F. p. 134. July 26 (received 26th). Lord Cranbrook sends to Lord Salisbury further particulars received from India.

F. p. 135. July 31 (received August 5). Mr. Plunkett (Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg) sends further particulars.

F. p. 140. July 30. Viceroy telegraphs report that

A. 227. "Kaufmann, with troops, had reached Karki,* and was personally proceeding to see Amir. Afghan officials at the Oxus tried to stop him, pending Amir's orders; but he declined to obey them. Amir thereupon sent orders forbidding opposition to Russian officers. Native Doctor heard Amir tell his Minister, in Durbar, 7th July, that Kaufmann, or officer of equal rank from Tashkend, had crossed Oxus on road to Kabul, refusing to be stopped. I refrained from telegraphing this information to you, pending confirmation. Have now heard from Peshawar reported arrival of Russian officer at Kabul with large military escort. This, of course, cannot be Kaufmann, and may be Native of rank in Russian service; though all accounts as yet point to European officer. If such Mission be authenticated I will telegraph again. It will be difficult to act or instruct frontier officers without definite indication of views of Cabinet on such conduct on part of Russia and Amir, having regard to Russia's formal promises, and Amir's refusal to receive British Mission in any shape. What I shall then require to know without delay is, whether this will be treated by Her Majesty's Government as an Imperial question with Russia, or left to us to deal with as a matter between Amir and Government of India. In latter case, I shall propose, with your approval, to insist on immediate suitable reception of European British Mission. I will communicate with you further on measures which may in this contingency become necessary for securing due permanent preponderance in Afghanistan. The alternative would be continued policy of complete inaction, difficult to maintain, and very injurious to our position in India."

July 31. Viceroy telegraphs report that three Russians had reached Cabul, accompanied by Cossacks and Uzbek horsemen.

A. 227. August 1. Lord Cranbrook telegraphs to Viceroy:—

A. p. 228. "Make yourself certain of the facts before insisting on the reception of British envoy. Perhaps you might send a Native to ascertain whether Russians are really there, and telegraph to me when the truth is known."

August 2. Viceroy telegraphs twice in reply. The second being the most full report:—

A. p. 228. "Further confirmation received of presence of Russian Mission at Kabul, headed by General Abramoff, Governor of Samarkand, who is mentioned by name.

"Referring to my telegram of 30th, we desire to point out that present situation requires immediate correction. It will soon be known throughout India that Russian officers and troops have been received with honour, and are staying at Kabul, within short distance of our frontier and our largest military garrison, while our officers have been denied admission there.

"We have further reports of Russian officers having visited and been well received at Maimena.

It is to be remarked that this telegram is marked "extract," and that the whole of it is not given.

August 8. Lord Cranbrook, after reciting assurances

given by Russia, that she would not interfere with Afghanistan, writes Lord Salisbury :—

“ The Russian Government has thus, during the last ten years, stood pledged to an attitude of absolute non-intervention in the affairs of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the policy of the British Government towards the State during the same period has been shaped in an entirely opposite sense; it has been, in fact, to exercise a proper and legitimate influence at Cabul; to encourage Shere Ali in a peaceful policy towards his neighbours; to respect his independence, and, whilst accepting no further responsibility in regard to his action than to press on him, when needful, our friendly advice, to protect him from foreign interference and aggression. In other words, whilst Russia has bound herself to abstain from exercising influence of any kind in Afghanistan, the policy of Her Majesty's Government has been in the interests of peace to exercise an influence which should be unchallenged and paramount.

“ It is true that the Russian Government has denied the reality of any such step on its part as that now reported. M. de Giers has formally stated, in fact, to Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, that no such Mission as that referred to by Lord Lytton has been, or was intended to be, sent to Cabul by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann; he has, with equal emphasis, denied the existence of intrigues between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali. But in the face of the particulars now received from India, corroborated as they are from other sources, Viscount Cranbrook cannot pretend to accept as satisfactory these denials.

“ Assuming the truth of the fact reported, it appears that, contrary to all engagements with England, a Russian Mission has found its way to the Ameer of Cabul, who has received it, either willingly, or under pressure, without reference to the Indian Government. This Mission is said to be backed by four Russian columns, aggregating some 15,000 men, moving through the Turkoman country, and on the line of the Oxus, and converging on points which may be said to directly menace the safety and integrity of Afghanistan.

“ To meet this difficulty the Viceroy has proposed, as a preliminary measure, to insist on the reception by the Ameer of a suitable British Mission at Cabul, a proposal which the Secretary of State for India has deemed it expedient to sanction.

“ But Lord Cranbrook cannot consider this step as adequate in itself to the occasion, and is strongly of opinion that Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg should be at once instructed to address the Russian Cabinet upon the proceedings of the Russian authorities in Turkestan.

“ It is the Russian Cabinet alone which is responsible for the acts of its Agent; and it is the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan, rather than the Ameer Shere Ali, who, with or without authority, is at this moment pursuing a policy of which the effect must be to seriously agitate the minds of Her Majesty's subjects throughout India.

“ In view of the gravity of the situation, the Secretary of State for India may safely leave to Lord Salisbury, who has a full knowledge of the question, the adoption of such language at St. Petersburg as he may think best calculated to bring about a result such as the engagements of Russia entitle us to expect.”

August 9. Viceroy telegraphs report from Cabul of F. p. 142.
July 30th, that Ameer had received Russian Envoy in Durbar, on 26th, and that he had presented two letters, one from the Governor-General of Tashkend, one from the Czar.

August 9. Lord Cranbrook sends the telegram to F. p. 143.
Lord Salisbury.

August 13. Lord Cranbrook writes Lord Salisbury. F. 145.

“ The reports which reached her Majesty's Government in the spring of the year, announcing extensive military preparations in Russian Turkestan for some object not officially revealed, received practical confirmation in the General Order issued by the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan on the 14th May last. That General Order, which was stated to be based on instructions received from the Russian Minister of War, directed the formation, as a preliminary

measure, of three operating columns, aggregating some 15,000 men. The principal column, consisting of about 12,000 combatants at full strength, under Major-General Trofsky, was ordered to be formed at Samarcand, to proceed thence to Djam; and further, according to orders, the second column, organised at Marghilan, and consisting of about 1,700 men, was to proceed, under command of Major-General Abramoff, to the Kizil-Su Valley, where it was also to await further orders; the third, or Amu-Darya (Oxus) column, formed at Petro-Alexandrovsck, under Colonel Grotenhelm, and amounting to about 1,700 men, was to move up the banks of the Oxus to Chardjui, and further according to orders. In addition to these three columns, a force of five regiments of infantry and some guns, besides 1,000 Cossacks, or some 4,000 men in all, has, according to reports received from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Tehran, been organised at Chikishlar on the Caspian, for the occupation of the Akhal country, a measure which, by the latest information received in this Office, is in course of execution, with the consent and assistance of the Persian Government.

Thus, there are reported to be in movement in the trans-Caspian district, and on the Oxus, four Russian military expeditions, comprising nearly 20,000 men, converging on points which directly command Merv and the Akhal country, and menace the northern frontier of Afghanistan.

In the absence of an explanation from official Russian sources, it may be surmised that the object of the Russian Government in originally sanctioning the movements in question, was to anticipate the contingency of a war with England, and consequent danger to Russian Turkestan by seizing strategical positions on the Oxus and elsewhere. The Russian press is generally so well informed on these matters, that Lord Cranbrook would invite Lord Salisbury's particular attention to the articles referred to in the margin,* which strongly support the view above expressed.

It will be in Lord Salisbury's recollection that when, in the spring of 1875, the Russian Ambassador at the Court of St. James, called upon the Earl of Derby to ascertain more clearly than he had yet done the "views of Her Majesty's Government on the Central Asian question," he was reminded of the warning which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs had already given to him of the great importance which the Indian Government attached to Merv, and of the danger to the relations between the two Governments that would, in Lord Derby's opinion, ensue if that place were meddled with. The private interchange of views, which at that period took place, resulted, as Lord Salisbury is aware, in the important communication, dated the 5th of April of that year, addressed by Prince Gortchakow to Count Schouvaloff, inclosing a Memorandum which reviewed all the correspondence that had passed between the two Governments since 1864. That Memorandum expressed the determination of the Czar not to extend the frontier of Russia beyond its then existing limits, either in the direction of Bokhara, Krasnovodsk, or the Attrek, reiterated in unmistakable language a declaration on the part of the Russian Government that Afghanistan was a State outside the sphere of Russian action, but at the same time concluded by claiming full liberty of action over the countries intervening between the Russian possessions and the latter State.

"This claim so gravely qualified the formal and satisfactory assurances given in the earlier paragraphs of Prince Gortchakow's communication that the reply of the English Cabinet was framed in language which could not be mistaken in its import. Whilst frankly accepting the assurances given by the Russian Chancellor, it strongly deprecated any further advance of the Russian frontier towards Afghanistan as being likely to involve complications which might seriously compromise the integrity of Afghan territory, "to maintain which Her Majesty's Government reserved the most complete liberty of action under all future contingencies."

"The exchange of views thus carried on between the two Governments in 1875, conceived and conducted in a conciliatory manner on both sides, had no practical result. In spite of the direct engagement recorded in Prince Gortchakow's Memorandum as to non-extension of Russian territory, the Russian Government increased rather than relaxed its activity in the Turkoman country, and on the Oxus. On the strength of rights secured in 1873 by Treaties with Khiva and Bokhara, the Governor-General of Turkestan placed steamers on that river, and despatched exploring parties to Hissar, Kulab, Sherabad, and elsewhere in its neighbourhood; whilst, in direct contravention of orders

* "Russki Mir," May 11; Moscow Gazette, July 17.

issued by His Imperial Majesty, the Russian Commander of the trans-Caspian district scoured the country in the neighbourhood of the Attrek with a considerable force. Close upon this renewed activity followed the annexation of Khokand, as well as a marked increase of correspondence (carried by Russian Agents) between the Russian Governor-General of Turkestan and the Ameer Shere Ali, in a tone, on the part of General Kaufmann, which drew from Her Majesty's Government a remonstrance at St. Petersburg.

"In short, far from the Russian Government adhering to its pledges of 1875, the past three years have been marked by a considerable increase of territory, by expeditions into the Akhal country, by secret Missions of Russian Agents both in the Turkoman country and in Western Afghanistan, and, finally, by the present military movements.

"Lord Cranbrook is not in a position at this moment to indicate what effective steps should, in his opinion, be taken by the Indian Government in the altered situation created by the proceedings of the Russian authorities in Turkestan; but requests Lord Salisbury to keep him informed of any measures which he may adopt to obtain explanations from the Russian Government, and the result."

August 14. (received 19th.) Mr. Plunkett reports the following conversation with M. de Giers :—

"Reverting to the explanation which he had given to Lord A. Loftus, that, in view of the probability of a war with Great Britain, the Russian military commanders in Asia had been justified in preparing such measures as they deemed most likely to prejudice Great Britain, I said that peace was now happily secured, and therefore I ventured to inquire what measures had been taken for arresting the march of the Russian columns which had left Tashkend and Krasnovodsk, and whether it was true that the Russian Envoy or Agent was still residing at Cabul.

"After carefully weighing his words his Excellency replied that I must understand that, in questions of military movements, he could not be answerable for the details, with which he was naturally not acquainted; he could only answer for the principles which had been laid down for the policy of the Government. He could then assure me that it was not true that any Russian Emissary had proceeded to Cabul with any letter from the Emperor to the Ameer. Possibly there might have been a letter from General Kaufmann. Orders had been given to arrest the march of all the columns which had been put in movement from Tashkend, and as a matter of fact he was under the impression, although he could not tell me so, either officially or positively, that the troops had already resumed their old stations.

"I then inquired whether the column which had left Krasnovodsk under General Llamakin had also returned; but on this point I failed to elicit any distinct reply.

"I obtained, however, an assurance from M. de Giers, which he repeated to me twice, that all the special measures which had been taken in Central Asia, and which, M. de Giers said, Russia had as much right to take, in view of the impending risk of war, as Great Britain had had to bring Indian troops to Malta, had been stopped; and he asserted positively that at the present moment no military measures whatever were being taken which could give umbrage to Her Majesty's Government.

"I said that I was glad to receive these assurances as regards the military movements; could his Excellency give me equally satisfactory assurances concerning those *political steps* which had been commenced in view of complications with Great Britain?

"M. de Giers at once replied: 'Everything has been stopped. The political as well as the military precautions which we thought ourselves justified in taking against you—everything has been stopped.'

"I have full confidence that in the above assurances M. de Giers correctly conveyed to me the substance of the orders sent from here as far as the Cabinet knows them; but he had warned me that he was necessarily ignorant of many military details, and experience has already shown how elastic Imperial orders become by the time they reach Tashkend."

F. p. 7.

August 14 (received 19th). Mr. Plunkett sends further information as to Russian movements.

"These articles are at present interesting, more from a theoretical than from a practical point of view.

F. p. 148.

"The opinion is here very generally entertained in well-informed circles, and it is confirmed by the official assurances reported in my despatch of this date, that the contemplated movement in Central Asia has been stopped since the conclusion of the Peace of Berlin."

F. p. 149.

August 19. Lord Salisbury writes Mr. Plunkett:—

"The Russian Government has thus, during the last ten years, stood pledged to an attitude of absolute non-intervention in the affairs of Afghanistan. On the other hand, the policy of the British Government towards that State has confessedly, and with the concurrence and approval of Russia, been shaped, during the same period, in an entirely opposite sense; it has been, in fact, to exercise a proper and legitimate influence at Cabul; to encourage Shere Ali in a peaceful policy towards his neighbours; to respect his independence; and, whilst accepting no further responsibility in regard to his action than to press on him, when needful, our friendly advice, to protect him from foreign interference and aggression. In other words, whilst Russia has bound herself to abstain from exercising influence of any kind in Afghanistan, the policy of Her Majesty's Government has been, in the interests of peace, to exercise an influence which should be unchallenged and paramount.

"The Government of Russia have given that of Her Majesty no reason to suppose that they had departed from the line of policy thus indicated. On the contrary, when inquiries were recently made by Lord A. Loftus, as reported in his despatch of the 3rd ultimo, M. de Giers emphatically denied that any such Mission as is now spoken of had been sent, or was intended to be sent, to Cabul, either by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann.

"But the circumstantial reports now received from India corroborated as they are from other sources, are of a nature which it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to ignore or overlook.

"Assuming the truth of the facts reported, it would appear that a Russian Mission has found its way to the Ameer of Cabul, who has received it, either willingly or under pressure. This Mission is said to be backed by four Russian columns, aggregating some 15,000 men, moving through the Turkoman country, and on the line of the Oxus, and so directed that the Ameer may not unnaturally consider them as offering a menace to the safety and integrity of his dominions.

"I must therefore request you to mention these reports to Prince Gortchakow, and to inquire whether there is any foundation for them. You will not conceal from His Highness that proceedings of the kind referred to would cause uneasiness in India and dissatisfaction in this country; and should it prove that there is any truth in the statement that a Russian Mission has proceeded to Cabul, you will express the hope of Her Majesty's Government that it may be at once withdrawn, as being inconsistent with the assurances so frequently received from His Highness."

August 16th (received 21st). Mr. Plunkett sends information that the Russian military movements had been stopped since the Congress of Berlin, adding:—

F. p. 150, 152.

"I beg also to submit to your Lordship a translation taken from the 'Agence Russe,' of an article from the 'Golos,' which endeavours to prove that the Russian movements in Central Asia are the reply of this Empire to the Anglo-Turkish Convention of the 4th June; but I would venture to remark that, as General Stoletoff, who commands the expedition, was despatched on his mission so long ago as the end of March, or commencement of April, the dates of the two events clearly prove the hollow nature of the argument put forth by the 'Golos.'"

F. p. 154.

August 27 (received September 2nd). Mr. Plunkett reports the receipt on the 26th of Lord Salisbury's despatch of the 19th; that he had failed in obtaining an interview with M. de Giers, and had consequently addressed him on the 26th a note embodying Lord Salisbury's despatch.

August 28 (received September 2nd).

September 4 (received September 10th).

F. p. 156.
F. p. 157.

Mr. Plunkett sends reports regarding the movements

of the Russian troops, shewing that the last portion of the expeditionary force was to have returned to Tashkend by the 30th of August.

September 10. Lord Cranbrook sends Lord Salisbury information from India as to the proceedings of Russian agents at Cabul in May and June, 1878. (This information does not relate to the mission of General Stoletoff, but to previous transactions.)

F. p. 150.

Sept. 10 (received 16th). Mr. Plunkett reports that on the 6th he inquired "why he had not yet received any answer to the request of Her Majesty's Government that the Russian Mission should be withdrawn from Cabul," he continued :—

"I pointed out to him that in the 'Journal de St. Pétersbourg' of the previous day, there was an account of the progress of the Mission towards Cabul; that after the repeated assurances given to Her Majesty's Government, it was difficult to see what right such a Mission had to go there; and even if, as the Russian Government now tried to argue, such a step was an act of legitimate preparation in view of the then possible war with Great Britain, there could now no longer be any excuse for such a measure, after the signature of the Peace of Berlin. I added that the question raised in my note was one which deeply affected the interests of Great Britain, and that I must therefore beg him to press M. de Giers for a reply.

"M. de Melnikoff promised that he would immediately inform M. de Giers of my wishes. After objecting to my having quoted any extract from the unofficial portion of the 'Journal de St. Pétersbourg,' M. Melnikoff stated that the Foreign Department had not been aware of the despatch of this Mission; that it had been sent by General Kaufmann, in the exercise of the discretion with which he is invested as Governor-General of Turkestan; and that the Foreign Department often did not know exactly where the Mission might be, except from what it learnt through the Ministry of War.

"To this I replied that Central Asiatic affairs being directly under the Foreign Department, except in so far as regards military details, I could not accept this explanation, for, even if General Kaufmann had taken upon himself, without permission, such a step as to send a Mission to Afghanistan, the Foreign Department were responsible for the acts of their Agents, and might long ago have directed him to recall it."

F. p. 162.

Sept. 13 (received 18th). Mr. Plunkett sends M. de Giers' reply to Lord Salisbury's note, which I quote in full.

F. p. 164.

Livadia, le ^{27 Août} _{8 Septembre,} 1878.

M. le Chargé d'Affaires.

C'E n'est qu'aujourd'hui que je me trouve en mesure de répondre à la note que vous avez bien voulu m'adresser en date du 11 courant et qui m'est parvenue durant mon voyage.

Tout en reconnaissant la parfaite exactitude des citations faites dans cette pièce, je ne puis que confirmer ce qui j'ai eu déjà l'honneur de vous dire, c'est que les dispositions du Gouvernement Impérial dans la question de l'Asie Centrale, dont ces citations reproduisent les témoignages, ont dû nécessairement subir le contre-coup des conditions politiques dans lesquelles l'attitude de l'Angleterre nous a placé durant la dernière crise en Orient. Mais dans les circonstances actuelles, ces dispositions sont les mêmes que jadis, et de nature à n'inspirer aucune défiance au Gouvernement Anglais.

Je dois ajouter que la mission, qu'à tort vous attribuez au Général Abramow, est d'un caractère provisoire et de pure courtoisie; elle ne peut dès lors porter la moindre atteinte aux assurances pacifiques que vous mentionnez.

J'aime à espérer que les explications que M. Bartholomei a déjà été chargé de donner à Lord Salisbury à ce sujet auront suffisamment éclairci la situation.

September 20. Lord Salisbury forwards copy to Lord Cranbrook observing:—

F. p. 165.

“ Lord Salisbury infers from M. de Giers’ note that his Excellency acknowledges that all the former assurances of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan have now recovered their validity.”

And on the same day Lord Salisbury replied to Mr. Plunkett’s despatch of the 13th as follows:—

F. p. 165.

“ IN the note from M. de Giers of the ^{27th August, 8th September} of which copy is inclosed in your despatch of the 13th instant, reference is made to explanations which the Russian Chargé d’Affaires in London had been instructed to offer in regard to the recent proceedings of the Russian authorities in Central Asia.

“ The communications made by M. Bartholomei have been generally to the same effect as what has been stated by M. de Giers. He has stated that the military and political measures adopted in Turkestan were actuated by the necessities of the situation caused by the state of affairs in regard to Turkey, and were called forth especially by the attitude of Great Britain towards Russia. General Kaufmann’s proceedings, he said, must therefore be regarded as the result of a course imposed upon him by the force of circumstances.

“ As I had spoken to M. Bartholomei of a letter from the Emperor which was supposed to have been transmitted to Shere Ali Khan, he asked the Russian Government for information on the point, and subsequently said that he was authorised to state that there had never been any question of sending such a letter.”

It will be seen (1) that M. de Giers entirely evaded the demand made upon him by the British Government that the Mission to Cabul should be withdrawn; (2) that the acknowledgment which Lord Salisbury assumes to have been given by M. de Giers that all the former assurances of the Russian Government had recovered their validity, was by no means clearly conveyed in M. de Giers’ note of the 8th of September; (3) that no reply was addressed by Lord Salisbury to the Russian Government. There the matter rests, some Russian officers, according to the last telegrams, still remaining in Cabul.

NORTHBROOK.

December 7, 1878.

For A. N. 6604 No. 171
See 5th 1870

I shall endeavour in this memorandum to give an account of the relations between the Government of India and the Ameer of Cabul so far as they bear upon the present Afghan Question.

2. It is unnecessary to go back further than the close of the war with Afghanistan. In 1842 the British army returned to India, leaving Dost Mahomed as Ruler of Afghanistan. On the 30th of March, 1855, Sir John (now Lord) Lawrence concluded a treaty with Dost Mahomed in the following terms:—

ARTICLE 1st.

“Between the Honourable East India Company and His Highness Ameer Dost Mohammed Khan, Walee of Cabool and of those countries of Afghanistan now in his possession, and the heirs of the said Ameer, there shall be perpetual peace and friendship.”

ARTICLE 2nd.

“The Honourable East India Company engages to respect those territories of Afghanistan now in His Highness's possession, and never to interfere therein.”

ARTICLE 3rd.

“His Highness Ameer Dost Mohammed Khan, Walee of Cabool and of those countries of Afghanistan now in his possession, engages on his own part, and on the part of his heirs, to respect the territories of the Honourable East India Company, and never to interfere therein; and to be the friend of the friends, and enemy of the enemies of the Honourable East India Company.”

This Treaty is still in force, and is the only treaty engagement we have with Afghanistan.

3. In January, 1857, in consequence of the war between Great Britain and Persia caused by the latter Power having taken possession of Herat, an agreement was made with Dost Mahomed, by which he agreed to defend Afghanistan against Persia, and we furnished him with money and arms.

4. During the Sepoy Mutiny Dost Mahomed was faithful to his treaty engagements, and did not disturb the British frontier.

5. Dost Mahomed died on the 9th of June, 1863, and after a long civil war his son Shere Ali, the present Ameer of Afghanistan, obtained possession of Cabul in September, 1868. Sir John Lawrence, who was then Governor-General, had during the civil war abstained from giving any support to the rival candidates for the throne, but when he found that Shere Ali had fairly established himself, he telegraphed, on the 10th of September, 1868, to the Secretary of State, that

“As Shere Ali would undoubtedly be in great straits for arms and money, now would be the time to help him with effect; and it would, therefore, be expedient to let him understand that, if he applied, he would receive assistance of that kind.”

In reply, Sir John Lawrence received authority to act on his own judgment in assisting Shere Ali in the manner proposed. At that time Sir Stafford Northcote was Secretary of State for India, and the action then taken was the first departure

from the policy of non-interference, or, as it was styled by Mr. Wyllie, of "masterly inactivity," and formed the commencement of the policy subsequently pursued.

6. Shere Ali, although he complained that he had received no help during the civil war, was anxious to receive the support of the British Government. In a conversation with the British Agent at Cabul, he expressed his wish to visit the Viceroy at Calcutta, and Sir John Lawrence had at the same time conveyed his opinion to the Agent that an interview between himself and the Ameer would be desirable. Circumstances in Afghanistan, however, prevented the interview from taking place during Sir John Lawrence's tenure of office. He furnished Shere Ali with money and arms, and addressed to him a letter on the 9th of January, 1869, which is important, as shewing the basis of our subsequent diplomatic relations with him. The letter runs as follows :—

"It is the earnest desire of the Government of India, as I have already intimated, to see your Highness's authority established on a basis of solidity and permanency, and to cement the bonds of friendship and alliance which ought to exist between the British Power and your Highness as an independent Ruler.

"You have been already apprised by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab that a sum of six lakhs of rupees has been placed at your unreserved disposal. For this the British Government looks for no other return than abiding confidence, sincerity, and good-will.

"I regret that obstacles of an insuperable nature should have prevented my meeting your Highness at some suitable place on the frontier of both kingdoms.

"As a further proof of the desire of the British Government, which fears no aggression and which wishes for no conquest, to see a strong, a just, and a merciful government established by your Highness at Cabul and throughout Afghanistan, I have to inform you that, in the course of the next three months, three sums of two lakhs of rupees each, or, in all, of six lakhs more, will be placed at your entire control, to be applied by your Highness in the manner which you may think most conducive to the furtherance of your interests and to the consolidation of your authority.

"For this, again, the Government of India will expect no return save one of the kind just indicated in the preceding part of this letter.

"I am leaving the country almost immediately, and am handing over the high office of Viceroy and Governor General to my successor.

"But the policy which I have advisedly pursued with regard to the affairs of Afghanistan is one which I have entered on with anxious deliberation, and which has commanded the assent and approval of Her Majesty the Queen of England ; and as long as you continue, by your actions, to evince a real desire for the alliance of the British Government, you have nothing to apprehend in the way of a change of policy, or of our interference in the internal affairs and administration of your kingdom.

"It will remain for the head of the Administration to consider, in each succeeding year, what further proofs may be given of our desire to see your power consolidated, and what amount of practical assistance, in the shape of money or materials of war, may periodically be made over to your Highness as a testimony of our good-will, and to the furtherance of your legitimate authority and influence.

"But be assured that you will never err in shaping your course with a view to British alliance, and in considering Her Majesty the Queen of England, and the Viceroy in India as your best and truest friends."

7. Lord Mayo assumed the government of India in the beginning of 1869, and, the Ameer being still desirous of a personal interview with the Viceroy, it was arranged to take place at Umballa in March, 1869. The formal record of the communications which then took place between Lord Mayo and Shere Ali is contained in Lord Mayo's letter to him of the 31st of March, which was written in the following language :—

"As your Highness did me the honour to intimate that some further expression of the sentiments of the British Government in regard to your present visit and to the affairs of Afghanistan, would be acceptable, it is with

much pleasure and satisfaction that I accede to your Highness's wishes in the following communication.

"I am most desirous of expressing to you the sincere gratification which the visit of your Highness has afforded to me and to all the members of my Government.

"I regard this visit as a mark of the confidence reposed by your Highness in the Government of the Queen, which will ever be remembered. I earnestly trust that, on your Highness's return to your own country, you may be enabled speedily to establish your legitimate rule over your entire kingdom, to consolidate your power, to create a firm and merciful administration in every province of Afghanistan, to promote the interests of commerce, and to secure peace and tranquillity within your borders.

"Although, as already intimated to you, the British Government does not desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, yet, considering that the bonds of friendship between that Government and your Highness have lately been more closely drawn than heretofore, it will view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of your rivals to disturb your position as Ruler of Cabul and rekindle civil war, and it will further endeavour, from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the Government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor.

"It is my wish, therefore, that your Highness should communicate frequently and freely with the Government of India and its officers on all subjects of public interest, and I can assure your Highness that any representation which you may make will always be treated with consideration and respect.

"By these means, and by the exercise of mutual confidence, I entertain well-grounded hopes that the most friendly relations between the British Government and that of your Highness may ever be maintained, to the advantage of the subjects both of Her Majesty the Queen and of your Highness."

The Ameer replied on the 3rd of April, saying

"That as long as he lived, or as long as his Government existed, the foundation of friendship between his own and the powerful Government of Great Britain would not (please God) be weakened. He hoped that the British Government would always be kind to him, and keep him under its protection."

8. Lord Mayo's letter, however, does not explain what the wishes of the Ameer were at Umballa, and how far Lord Mayo complied with them. The Ameer wished for a treaty which would guarantee him against all competitors to the throne of Afghanistan. He desired, moreover, that this guarantee should be extended to his young son, Abdoolla Jan, whom he brought with him to Umballa.* Lord Mayo explained in great detail in a despatch addressed to the Duke of Argyll, on the 1st of July, 1869, the policy which he had pursued,† and it is important that this policy should be clearly understood in order to appreciate the subsequent conduct of affairs. The following extracts from Lord Mayo's despatch will clearly explain what his policy was:—

"7. The Viceroy informed your Grace that no one could be more impressed than he was with the necessity for abstinence, on the part of the Government of India, from interference in Asian politics; that whether it be in the central portions of the continent, or elsewhere, our policy should be to keep on friendly terms with all our neighbours; to encourage them in any efforts they might make for the development and security of trade, but to let them know that if they chose to quarrel (which they are always ready to do) they must fight it out without any assistance from us; . . . that with regard to the approaching interview with the Ameer, the Viceroy's intention was to avoid any engagement of a permanent character, opposed as he was to treaties and subsidies; that it was impossible to discuss the matter until we knew what the Ameer was going to say; that His Highness's visit would, he believed, do much good, shewing him that we had no other wish than to see a strong Government in Afghanistan; that we had no thought of interfering with him in any way; that we wanted no Resident at Cabul, or political influence in his kingdom; while at the same time, it would impress the people of India generally with the idea that we had a faithful ally in Afghanistan.

"8. The object of the Viceroy, therefore, in agreeing to Shere Ali's request

* Note by Under Secretary, Foreign Department, March 26th, 1869.

† The Duke of Argyll had, in a despatch of May 14th, 1869, expressed his apprehensions lest the expressions used by Lord Mayo in his letter to the Ameer, might be construed to mean more than they were intended to convey. Lord Mayo's despatch of July 1st was written in explanation, and on its receipt, the Duke of Argyll, on August 27th, 1869, replied that the explanation was "in all respects satisfactory to Her Majesty's Government."

for a meeting, was to shew to him and to the world that we desired to establish with him a friendly and faithful alliance ; to encourage him in his efforts to create a thoroughly independent kingdom and a just and merciful Government ; to acknowledge him as the rightful Ruler of Cabul, not only as having inherited his throne by his father's will, made public in the lifetime of Dost Mahomed, but as the *de facto* sovereign of the country.

" 9. But the objects of the Ameer in coming to Umballa went far beyond this. It was evident from his communications with the Viceroy, the conversations of the Foreign Secretary with his Minister, and the paragraphs which he suggested for insertion in the letter to be addressed to him, that he desired a treaty supplementary to that made with his father in 1857 (which he termed one-sided), and which would declare that we should be ' the friend of his friends ' and ' the enemy of his enemies.' He further desired that we should publicly declare that we should never acknowledge ' any friend in the whole of Afghanistan save the Ameer and his descendants,' and he evidently expected a promise of a fixed subsidy.

" 10. But this was not all.

" 11. He desired and asked that the British Government should not be the sole judge of when and how future assistance was to be given, but earnestly pressed that the words in the Viceroy's letter, ' as circumstances may require,' should be altered to, ' as his (the Ameer's) welfare might require.'

" 12. Compliance with these desires was impossible, but it was necessary, by a straightforward and unmistakable expression of opinion, to furnish the Ameer with some declaration which (without encouraging hopes that could not be fulfilled) would be of present use; truly describing our feelings and intentions towards him, and satisfy him that his journey, and (to him) somewhat perilous absence from his kingdom, had not been made in vain.

" 13. This object was accomplished but not without difficulty.

" 14. A comparison of the principles laid down in your Grace's letter of the 14th May, with the action taken, and the opinions expressed at Umballa, will shew how completely in accord those principles and those actions are. And, although no instructions were received from the Home Government beyond a short general expression of desire contained in your Grace's private letter to the Viceroy, that he should ' maintain that policy of reserve and of abstinence from interference which has been pursued by your predecessor,' yet it can be shewn, not only that the communications made to the Ameer at the Conference did not exceed former promises or extend in any way our liabilities, but that in effect they thoroughly defined, and clearly explained, the position we had determined to assume towards Afghanistan, and rather limited any engagement or liability it might be supposed that we had previously lain under as regards His Highness.

" 15. The first words which the Viceroy addressed to the Ameer at the Conference of the 27th March, were to express the firm desire of the British Government to see established at Cabul a *just*, strong, and independent Government ; that we had no intention to deviate from the course which we had adopted since he had last regained his throne ; that we wished to see him firmly established as Ruler of Cabul, and that he should be able speedily to establish tranquillity and good government throughout his territories.

" 16. The policy that we have endeavoured to establish may be termed an intermediate one ; that is to say, that while we distinctly intimated to the Ameer that, under no circumstances, should a British soldier ever cross his frontier to assist him in coercing his rebellious subjects ; that no European officers would be placed as Residents in his cities ; that no fixed subsidy or money allowance would be given for any named period ; that no promise of assistance in other ways would be made ; that no treaty would be entered into, obliging us under *every* circumstance to recognise him and his descendants Rulers of Afghanistan, yet that we were prepared by the most open and absolute present recognition, and by every public evidence of friendly disposition, of respect for his character and interest in his fortunes, to give all the moral support in our power ; and that, in addition, we were willing to assist him with money, arms, ammunition, native artificers, and in other ways, whenever we deemed it possible or desirable to do so. . . .

" 20. The Ameer of Cabul fully understood that the British Government would assist him with money, now or hereafter, solely for the purpose of establishing a just and merciful as well as a strong Government in Afghanistan, and that the continuance of our support must always depend upon the pleasure of the Government of India. . . .

" 22. The position of affairs at the close of the Conferences may, in the Viceroy's words, confidentially addressed to your Grace, be summed up as follows :—

" Firstly.—What the Ameer is not to have.

" No treaty ; no fixed subsidy ; no European troops or Residents ; no dynastic pledges.

“ Secondly.—What he is to have.

“ Warm countenance and support; discouragement of his rivals; such material assistance as we may consider absolutely necessary for his immediate wants; constant and friendly communication through our Commissioner at Peshawur, and our Native Agents in Afghanistan; he, on his part, undertaking to do all he can to maintain peace on our frontier, and to comply with all our wishes on matters connected with trade. . . .

“ 45. One of the most urgent and prominent demands made by the Ameer at Umballa was, that we should recognise and acknowledge, not only himself, but his lineal descendants, against all comers, and under all circumstances.

“ 46. On every occasion that he brought the subject forward, the Viceroy declined to entertain it.

“ 47. At the further Conference that took place between His Excellency and the Ameer, he (the Ameer) declared that it was his earnest wish that the Government of India should recognise and acknowledge, not only himself, but his lineal descendants, or successors in blood, and this phrase he repeated several times with great earnestness and emphasis. He explained again, and at some length, that merely to acknowledge the Ruler *pro tem.* and *de facto* was to invite competition for a throne, and excite the hopes of all sorts of candidates; that if the British Government would recognise him and his dynasty, there was nothing he would not do in order to evince his gratitude, and to comply with the wishes of the Indian Government in any particular, and support them with his means and his life, it being understood that the slightest failure on his part, or his descendants', should vitiate all engagements on ours.

“ 48. The Viceroy, in reply, remarked that it was impossible to prophesy, or to anticipate events; that we must deal with the present, and that His Highness could not expect him to enter into engagements as to a state of circumstances which might never occur.”

It is not without interest or importance now to note that this policy received the approval of Sir Stafford Northcote, who was then no longer Secretary of State, but under whose tenure of office it was initiated. In the debate in the House of Commons on July 9th, 1869, Sir Stafford Northcote thoroughly approved the policy of refraining from treaty engagements with the Ameer, and expressed a strong opinion against any extension of our frontier in the direction of Afghanistan.

9. The policy thus clearly explained by Lord Mayo was steadily continued by him until his death in 1872; and the following account was given of it by Sir John Strachey, who was one of Lord Mayo's Council in India, in a Minute written on the 30th of April, 1872, immediately after his death:—

“ The cardinal points of the foreign policy which, in Lord Mayo's opinion, the Government of India should steadily pursue may easily be described. He desired to establish with all our frontier States intimate relations of friendship; to make them feel that though we are all-powerful, we have no desire to encroach on their authority, but, on the contrary, that our earnest desire is to support their power and maintain their nationality. He believed that we could thus create in these States outworks of the Empire, and assuring them that the days of annexation are past, make them practically feel that they have everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by endeavouring to deserve our favour and support.

“ There is hardly one of the kingdoms that border our Indian Empire of which it may not truly be said that peace and settled government have been unknown in it for ages. The history of one and all of them from Oman to Yarkund is a record of wars, revolutions, and dynastic changes succeeding each other with such rapidity as to leave in the mind of the reader only a confused feeling of bewilderment. This chronic state of turbulence and disorder, destructive of ancient landmarks and boundaries, and producing only weakness and disintegration, both provokes and invites annexation. It ruins the commerce, destroys the productiveness of the soil, scares away peaceful traders who have an interest in the preservation of order and settled government, creates a permanent class whose interest it is to perpetuate anarchy, and produces isolation, jealousy, and distrust in the countries that suffer from its curse. It was this state of things in India which forced on the extension of the British Empire to the mountains beyond the Indus. It is this state of things more than lust of conquest that has extended, in spite of herself, the dominion of Russia in Asia.

“ To apply a radical remedy to these evils was the main object of Lord

Mayo's foreign policy. Honestly proclaiming and shewing by his acts that the spectre of annexation was laid for ever, he taught our neighbours that they have nothing to fear from us. By bringing about a common understanding between the countries on our frontier, as to their mutual boundaries, he sought to remove every pretext for war and aggression. By assisting the rulers of these States to strengthen their internal government, and by bringing both his own personal influence and the moral support of the British Government to bear in putting down rebellions and revolutions, he endeavoured to establish firm, just, and merciful government. By the encouragement and development of trade, he hoped to break down the barriers which isolate those countries from us, and to create, both within and beyond our frontier, a permanent interest in the maintenance of good order. By free and friendly inter-communication, he desired to remove that ignorance as to our policy and that jealousy of our intentions which in past years have been so fruitful of mischief. And lastly, by endeavouring through frank and amicable discussion with the Russian Government to secure the adoption on their part of a similar policy in the countries on the Russian frontier in Asia which are subject to Russian influence, it was his hope that he would be instrumental in securing some degree of peace and prosperity to the exhausted countries of Central Asia, and in removing the causes of disquietude as to the designs of England and Russia which have been so prominent in the public mind in both countries.

"It is difficult for me, in the limited space at my disposal, to do justice to Lord Mayo's foreign policy. A reference to it, however, would be incomplete without special allusion to Afghanistan. The interview with the Ameer at Umballa at the end of March, 1869, was the first great public duty which Lord Mayo had to perform after his assumption of office, and the course pursued towards the Ameer furnishes the best illustration at once of Lord Mayo's general policy and of its effects.

"I shall not attempt more than the briefest sketch of the situation in Afghanistan at the time of Lord Mayo's accession to office. Sher Ali Khan, after an unbroken series of defeats for nearly three years, had, with the help of his able son Yakoub, re-seated himself on the throne of Cabul. His rival, Azim Khan, the usurping Ameer, was a fugitive, and Abdool Rahman was compelled to take refuge in Bokhara. Even in the earliest days of Sher Ali's return to power, there had been a time when, from absolute want of money, it seemed as if he could not keep together the troops on whom he depended for the retention of his newly-recovered sovereignty. From this strait he was relieved by the arrival of £20,000 sent by Lord Lawrence, who, on learning of his restoration, at once appreciated his urgent need of material help, and followed the first gift by instructions that £100,000 more should be given. Of the total sum, half had been actually delivered to the Ameer when Lord Mayo arrived in India, and the money had been accompanied by a present of some thousand stand of small-arms. The delivery of the remainder of the money, together with an additional present of a heavy battery of artillery, a mountain train battery, and 10,000 stand of arms and accoutrements, followed the visit paid by the Ameer to Lord Mayo at Umballa.

"The preliminary overtures for that visit had been made in the time of Lord Mayo's predecessor. Within the first few days of his restoration to power, Ameer Sher Ali had expressed his desire, as soon as the dangers most immediately imminent were dispelled, to visit the Viceroy, and thereby publish to all the world the stability of his friendship for the British Government. From that time, however, till the combat which resulted in the final break-up of the army of Azim and Abdool Rahman, just a week before Lord Mayo's arrival, there was no time when his absence from Cabul would not have been dangerous. Owing to various circumstances into which it is needless to enter, the meeting between the Viceroy and the Ameer did not take place until March, 1869. After repeated requests from the Ameer, who attached great importance to the meeting, Lord Mayo determined to grant it. The Viceroy stated his desire that it should take place at Umballa, and to this the Ameer gladly acceded. Leaving Afghanistan, he travelled through the whole extent of the Punjab, seeing our railways, our troops, and our institutions, and gaining an insight into the real strength of the British Government in India. He made no secret of his admiration. The Viceroy received the Ameer with all the pomp and ceremony befitting the occasion. The principal officers of the Government were present, and many of the most important of the native chiefs.

"The Ameer had come hoping for a fixed annual subsidy ; for assistance to be given, not when the British Government might think fit to grant, but when he might think it needful to solicit it ; and for a treaty laying the British Government under obligation to support the Afghan Government in any emergency, and not only the Afghan Government generally, but that Government as vested in himself and his direct descendants, and in no others. These hopes he was obliged to abandon ; yet he went back to his dominions a contented man. For he carried back with him not only material assistance in

money and arms, but an assurance of warm countenance and support such as had never before been given to any ruler in Afghanistan.

"It had taken many years to obliterate the memory of the disastrous policy of 1839-42, and to convince the Afghan nation that the British Power was not a neighbour whose aggression or interference was to be feared. The friendly meeting at Umballa came at the right time to remove the mistrust which had prevented British influence from being effectually exercised in Afghanistan; to bring home to the Ameer's mind the conviction that the British Government had no desire to extend its dominions; and to pave the way for the acceptance of what was to the Ameer the still stranger lesson, that his highest wisdom was to abstain from interfering in the affairs of his neighbours, and to play his part in the difficult task of restoring some measure of peace to the wasted regions of Central Asia.

"This advice, repeated in writing from time to time as opportunity offered, the Ameer has not been slow to accept.

"To the insidious counsels of those of his subjects who have occasionally prompted him to overstep the limits of his dominions and adopt an aggressive policy in retaliation for injuries real or fancied, the Ameer has ever turned a deaf ear. In accordance with the advice which has been given him by the late Viceroy, he has enjoined on his frontier officers a policy of watchful defence and of abstinence from aggression, and has endeavoured to settle his difficulties by diplomatic action, in a manner which has not only astonished his own people, but has excited the admiration of the Russian Government. These results have been carried out without any help from the British Government beyond strong moral support, and continued advice. Since 1869 the Ameer has received no subsidy or material assistance. At no time were the relations of the Ameer with his neighbours more peaceful and friendly than at present.

"I have already stated that it was one of the principal objects of Lord Mayo's policy to induce the Russian Government to adopt similar measures with regard to the Asiatic States under their immediate influence. The Ameer's reception at Umballa caused at the time considerable excitement in Russia. Exaggerated rumours of all kinds circulated in Central Asia, and were caught up by the Russian Press. Many affected to believe that some secret compact had been entered into with the Ameer to stir up the chiefs of the countries bordering on the Oxus to resist and repel the advances of Russia. Although these absurd fears were never entertained by the Russian Government, some anxiety was nevertheless exhibited on its part to obtain assurances that the Ameer of Afghanistan would be restrained from molesting the King of Bokhara. An opportunity for frank and friendly explanations presented itself in the mission of Mr. Forsyth to Russia in the first year of Lord Mayo's Viceroyalty. The full exposition of the peaceful policy that was then made elicited from the Emperor himself a statement that the Russian Government entertained no intention of extending their dominions; that if the idea of conquest were banished from the Ameer's mind there would be peace in Central Asia; and that while the good offices of England should be exerted to dissuade the Ameer from aggression, Russia would similarly use all her influence to restrain Bokhara from transgressing the limits of Afghan territory.

"The friendly interchange of assurances that both nations intend to devote all their influence to introduce peace into the troubled regions of Central Asia has been repeatedly renewed since then between the representative of Her Majesty's Government and the Ministers of Russia, and the fruits of this good understanding have been frequently manifested. To Russian influence on Bokhara was due the prompt withdrawal of a party of Bokhara troops who had crossed the Oxus in the winter of 1869. To the restraining hand kept by Russia on the Afghan refugees in Turkistan is to be attributed the absence of any attempt on their part to shake the throne of the Ameer. When the most formidable of those refugees, Abdool Rahman, once openly represented that it would be for the interest of Russia to assist him in conquering the throne of Cabul, General Von Kauffmann replied that hospitality had been afforded him in consideration of his destitute circumstances, and not as an enemy to England, or a pretender to the throne of Cabul. Russia, he said, wished every prosperity to Sher Ali, who had never given her any cause for dissatisfaction. General Von Kauffmann, himself, in the spring of 1870, commenced a direct correspondence, which has been renewed from time to time, and has conveyed to the Ameer assurances of the neighbourly sentiments entertained by the Russian authorities towards the Afghan Government. There is every reason to hope that the permanent definition of the boundaries between Afghanistan and Bokhara, a matter in which Lord Mayo took deep interest, will before long be accomplished with the consent of all who are concerned.

"Much still remains to be done before a feeling of security from foreign aggression is finally restored in those parts. The bitter experience of centuries has led the people to believe that strength is only used as an engine of conquest, and that when a new power appears on the scene its progress

would never cease spontaneously, but only when it has encountered a barrier stronger than itself. Any disposition on the part of one or other of the two chief powers who guide the destinies of Central Asia to extend their arms beyond existing limits, would undo in a moment the good that has been effected. But the British Government in Europe and Asia has done its part in endeavouring to avert the possibility of any such disaster. In the last three years it has left nothing undone, by counsel, to bring those who are most immediately concerned to a preference for the ways of peace, and by negotiation to get the principles, which should regulate their action for the future, placed on permanent record, not only as a guide to the immediate actors, but also as a basis for the expression of its opinion by the voice of Europe if peace is again disturbed."

10. I arrived in India in May, 1872, and I endeavoured during my tenure of office, to maintain the policy of Lord Mayo and Lord Lawrence with respect to Afghanistan, which Sir John Strachey has so well described.

11. In the interval between the years 1872 and 1876 considerable changes took place in the politics of Central Asia, and an important diplomatic correspondence between the British and Russian Governments was brought to a conclusion. The most considerable event which happened in Central Asia was the successful expedition of Russia against Khiva. This expedition brought the Russians into contact with the Turkoman tribes to the south of Khiva, tribes whose territory borders upon Afghanistan. On the other hand, the correspondence between Lord Clarendon, succeeded by Lord Granville, and the Russian Government, ended in that Government in the year 1872 accepting the boundary of Afghanistan which the Government of India had proposed, and engaging, so far as they could, to prevent the Khan of Bokhara from transgressing that boundary, while we on our side engaged to use our influence to prevent the Ameer of Afghanistan from doing the same in the other direction. This arrangement, made by us in the interests of Afghanistan, and of peace between England and Russia in Central Asia, afforded to Shere Ali a security with respect to his dominions which he had never before possessed.

12. He was, however, to judge by his expressions to our Agent at Cabul, more alarmed by the advance of Russia than reassured by the security which was given to him in consequence of our arrangement with Russia. In the beginning of the year 1873 it became necessary for me to explain to him the result of an arbitration which Lord Mayo had undertaken, at the instance of the Home Government, between Persia and Afghanistan with respect to the frontier of those countries in the province of Seistan.* I also wished to inform him of the particulars of the recognition given by Russia to the Afghan frontier. I suggested, therefore, that he should receive at Cabul a British officer who would be able to explain these matters to him.† His reply was that if I wished it he would receive a British officer, but that it would in his opinion be more convenient if, in the first place, at any rate, his Prime Minister should wait upon me at Simla, in order to hear what I wished to communicate to him. I acceded at once to his suggestion, and his Prime Minister, Noor Mahomed Shah, came to Simla in the summer of 1873.‡ The communications which passed on that occasion are at the present moment of some consequence, because it has been alleged that these communications, and not anything which has occurred since the year 1876, have been the cause of our present rupture with Shere Ali.

* The result of this arbitration was most unsatisfactory to the Ameer. He expected that we should decide in his favour; and he was very much disturbed on the subject.

† Lord Northbrook to Ameer, March 21st, 1873

‡ Lord Cranbrook, in his despatch to Lord Lytton of the 18th November (Paragraph 8), says that the Mission originated with the Ameer. This is not correct, and the error is of some importance, from the inference which is suggested in the account given of these negotiations in the despatch.

13. The policy, as will have been already seen, of the Government of India was to abstain from entering into any definite treaty engagement with Shere Ali which would give him either an unconditional guarantee of protection from external attack, or a guarantee that we would support his heir against other claimants to the throne of Afghanistan after his death; but to give him assurances of support and assistance so long as he on his side conducted his internal government with justice, and in his relations with States outside his border he was guided by the advice of the British Government.

14. While this was the policy which had been pursued in our relations with Shere Ali, the Government of India desired that it should be clearly understood by the Russian Government that England would defend Afghanistan against any unprovoked attack by Russia. That opinion was embodied in a despatch of 30th of June, 1873, from the Government of India to the Secretary of State. After giving a summary of the negotiations between Great Britain and Russia upon the boundary of Afghanistan, we said:—

“18. Although we have abstained from entering into any treaty engagement to support the Ameer by British troops, in the event of Afghanistan being attacked from without, yet the complete independence of Afghanistan is so important to the interests of British India that the Government of India could not look upon an attack upon Afghanistan with indifference. So long as the Ameer continues, as he has hitherto done, to act in accordance with our advice in his relations with his neighbours, he would naturally look for material assistance from us; and circumstances might occur under which we should consider it incumbent upon us to recommend Her Majesty's Government to render him such assistance.

“19. The assurances given by the Russian Government of their determination not to interfere with Afghanistan, have been clear and positive throughout the whole course of these negotiations. We unreservedly accept those assurances, and we are satisfied that this frank explanation of the position of the Government of India, as regards Afghanistan, will not be misinterpreted.

“20. Both Powers have now publicly avowed their adherence to the policy of not further extending their territorial possessions in the southern portion of Central Asia. They have pledged themselves reciprocally that so far as their influence extends over the States lying between their respective frontiers, that influence will be exerted, in the interests of the general peace, to restrain those States from aggression upon each other. As regards Afghanistan, the boundary recently settled is to be the limit of the Ameer's dominions; while, on the one hand, the Government of India are to use all the influence they possess with the Ameer to prevent him from transgressing that boundary, Russia will, on her part, use all her influence over Bokhara and the other States to which her influence extends, to restrain them from aggressions on Afghanistan. Therefore, so long as the Ameer confines himself to the boundary now defined, he need fear no molestation from Russia, or the countries under her influence.

“21. Should our general view of the recent negotiations, and of the obligations which will consequently devolve upon us, receive the approval of Her Majesty's Government, we should suggest that a copy of this despatch might be communicated to the Russian Government, in order that we may act with freedom and confidence in our future communications with the different countries whose interests are concerned.” *

* It was not considered desirable at the time by Lord Granville, nor afterwards by Lord Derby, to make this communication to Russia. Subsequently Lord Derby made a communication which was very nearly what we suggested.

15. I, therefore, when the Afghan Prime Minister came to Simla in the summer of 1873, had to deal with two questions; first, to obtain the acceptance by the Ameer of the Seistan arbitration, and secondly, to explain to him the result of the negotiations between the British Government and Russia with respect to the frontier of Afghanistan. A third question had, moreover, arisen, in consequence of the murder of Major Macdonald by a relation of the chief of a tribe over which the Ameer of Afghanistan held the supremacy. I may dismiss this third question by

saying that the Ameer, without any pressure, agreed to everything which the British Government considered it right to demand as a satisfaction for that incident. There was some difficulty in persuading the Ameer to accept the Seistan arbitration, but ultimately he gave his reluctant but unqualified adherence to the settlement. Upon the other and the most important question of the three, I found that the Ameer entertained great apprehensions that Russia, in consequence of her recent advances, might be brought into contact with Afghanistan, and that he desired more specific assurances than had been given to him by Lord Mayo of protection from Russian attack. Under these circumstances I consulted the Secretary of State by telegram on the 27th of June, whether I should communicate to the Prime Minister the substance of the 18th paragraph of the despatch of the 30th of June, 1873 (which I telegraphed in anticipation of the despatch), and which has been quoted above.* The reply of the Secretary of State, of the 1st of July, was:—

* See paragraph 14.

“I do not object to the general sense of the paragraph which you quote as a communication to Russia from the Foreign Office, but great caution is necessary in assuring Ameer of material assistance which may raise undue and unfounded expectations. He already shews symptoms of claiming more than we may wish to give.”

16. I acted upon these instructions in my first conversation with the Prime Minister which occurred on the 12th of July, using the following language:—

“The Ameer must be well aware that, occupying as Afghanistan does an intervening position between the British and Russian dominions, it was important for the interests of India that she should be both a strong and an independent State.” “If in the event of any aggression from without, British influence were invoked and failed by negotiation to effect a satisfactory settlement, it was probable that the British Government would in that case afford the Ruler of Afghanistan material assistance in repelling an invader. Such assistance would, of course, be conditional on the Ameer following the advice of the British Government, and having himself abstained from aggression.”

But finding that those assurances were not sufficient, I telegraphed again to the Secretary of State on the 24th of July in the following words:—

“Ameer of Cabul alarmed at Russian progress; dissatisfied with general assurances and anxious to know definitely how far he may rely on our help if invaded. I propose to assure him if he unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations we will help him, with money, arms, and troops, if necessary, to repel unprovoked invasion. We to be the judge of the necessity.”

I received a reply on the 26th of July, that

“The Cabinet think you should inform Ameer that we do not at all share his alarm, and consider there is no cause for it. But you may assure him we shall maintain our settled policy in favour of Afghanistan, if he abides by our advice in external affairs.”

17. Having received this reply, and having fully considered it, I felt myself authorised to give to the Prime Minister assurances which went beyond those which I had given in my first interview.† It will be noticed that I omitted the word “probable,” which the Prime Minister did not consider satisfactory. My words in my last interview with the Prime Minister, on the 30th of July, were these:—

“The British Government did not share the Ameer’s apprehensions (of attack by Russia); but that, as already mentioned in the previous conversation, it would be the duty of the Ameer, in case of any actual or threatened aggression, to refer the question to the British Government, who would endeavour by negotiation, and by every means in their power, to settle the matter and avert hostilities. It was not intended, by insisting on such

† In a private letter from me to the Duke of Argyll, of the 28th of July, 1873, I wrote:—“Your telegram of the 26th enabled me to give the Cabul Envoy sufficiently distinct assurances.”

previous reference to the British Government, to restrict or interfere with the power of the Ameer, as an independent ruler, to take such steps as might be necessary to repel any aggression on his territories ; but such reference was a preliminary and essential condition of the British Government assisting him. In such event, should these endeavours of the British Government to bring about an amicable settlement prove fruitless, the British Government are prepared to assure the Ameer that they will afford him assistance in the shape of arms and money, and will also in case of necessity aid him with troops. The British Government holds itself perfectly free to decide as to the occasion when such assistance should be rendered, and also as to its nature and extent ; moreover, the assistance will be conditional upon the Ameer himself abstaining from aggression, and on his unreserved acceptance of the advice of the British Government in regard to his external relations."

It will be observed that the words I used were almost identical with those which I had asked for authority to use in my telegram of the 24th of July.

18. During these negotiations I had directed the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India to ascertain from the Prime Minister what Shere Ali really wanted from the British Government. His wishes will be seen from the following account of the conversation between the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister.

The Envoy asked :

" That a written assurance might be given to him to the effect that if Russia or any State of Turkestan or elsewhere, under Russian influence, should commit an aggression on the Ameer's territories, or should otherwise annoy the Ameer, the British Government would consider such aggressor an enemy, and that they would promise to afford to the Ameer promptly such assistance in money and arms as might be required until the danger should be past or invasion repelled. Also, that if the Ameer should be unable to cope single-handed with the invader, that the British Government should promptly despatch a force to his assistance, by whatever route the Ameer might require the same, the said force to be employed against the invader and to return to British territory when the invasion was repelled. No return for the assistance above mentioned to be required by the British Government from Afghanistan. Such assistance to be rendered solely out of friendship to Afghanistan, and with the view of protecting the integrity of the frontier, so that the existing friendship of both countries should be maintained."

19. From this conversation it appears that Shere Ali wished to receive a guarantee of protection from external attack without any stipulation whatever on his side in return ; and it was moreover apparent, from other conversations with the Prime Minister, that he would not have been satisfied without very large payments of money from us for the fortification of his frontier and the thorough organisation and equipment of his army, to prepare him to meet the attack which he apprehended from Russia.

20. To have agreed to those proposals would have made a change in the policy which we had hitherto pursued towards Afghanistan. Accordingly, not only because such a change would have been contrary to the instructions which the Government of India had received from Her Majesty's Government, but because in my opinion such a change would have been impolitic and possibly dangerous, I did not recommend the Government to entertain the proposal, made by the Prime Minister of Shere Ali, for an unconditional guarantee of protection.

21. I addressed a letter to the Ameer on the 6th of September, at the close of the negotiations, and after giving some explanations of the correspondence with Russia about the Afghan boundary, I continued as follows :—

" The result of the communications between the British and the Russian Governments has been, in my opinion, materially to strengthen the position

of Afghanistan and to remove apprehension of dangers from without. . . . To this settlement the British Government are a party, and they are consequently even more interested than before in the maintenance of the integrity of your Highness's frontier. I have had some conversation with your Envoy on the subject of the policy which the British Government would pursue in the event of an attack upon your Highness's territories. A copy of the record of these conversations is attached to this letter. But the question is, in my opinion, one of such importance that the discussion of it should be postponed to a more suitable opportunity.

"I do not entertain any apprehensions of danger from your Highness's territories from without, and I therefore do not consider that it is necessary that your Highness should at present incur any large expenditure with a view to such a contingency. My hope is that, having received the foregoing assurances, your Highness will now be enabled to devote your undisturbed attention to the consolidation and improvement of your internal Government. The British Government desires to see your Highness's country powerful and independent. It is my determination to maintain the policy which has been adopted towards your Highness by my predecessors, Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo, and I repeat to your Highness the assurance given you at the Umballa Durbar, that the British Government will endeavour, from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the Government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor."

It is necessary to observe that the "record of conversations" to which I referred in my letter to the Ameer, were formal documents, which had been translated and officially communicated at the time to the Ameer's Prime Minister, and by which the British Government were, in my opinion, bound.

22. My reasons for writing to the Ameer that the discussion of the question should be postponed to a more suitable opportunity are explained in the following paragraphs of the despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State, of the 15th of September, 1873:—

"5. The question of the policy to be pursued in case of actual or threatened aggression on Afghanistan was the subject of considerable discussion with the Envoy. After receipt of your Grace's telegram of the 1st July, the Envoy was informed at the interview of the 12th idem that if, in the event of any aggression from without, British influence were involved, and failed by negotiation to effect a satisfactory settlement, it was probable the British Government would afford to the Ameer material assistance in repelling an invader, but that such assistance would be conditional on the Ameer following the advice of the British Government, and having himself abstained from aggression. Further and more definite explanations were given on this subject in the conversation with the Envoy of the 30th July, to which we beg to refer your Grace.

"A copy and translation of these conversations were annexed to the letter which the Viceroy has addressed to the Ameer. But as the subject is one of great importance, and the Envoy appeared to doubt how far his instructions justified him in committing himself to any definite arrangement, we considered it advisable to postpone the settlement of it to a more favourable opportunity, when we trust the matter may be discussed with the Ameer in person."

The Ameer had remarked to the British Agent at Cabul that he considered it to be advisable that one of his Agents should wait upon me and represent his views, in order that

"After receipt of full information about the views of the British Government these matters may be satisfactorily settled after deep consideration and the most careful deliberation on their probable consequences."*

23. The result then, of the communications which passed in 1873 between Shere Ali's Prime Minister and myself was, that an assurance of protection was given to him in terms which went beyond the expressions used by Lord Mayo in 1869; but that, as Lord Mayo had done in 1869, I declined to comply to the full extent with his wishes with regard to the unconditional assurances to be given to him by, and the assistance to be received by

* Letter from the British Agent at Cabul to the Commissioner of Peshawar, of April 14th, 1873.

him from, the British Government. It is my opinion now as it was then, that the policy which was pursued was a right policy. It was impossible, consistently with the interests of India, to have agreed to everything which Shere Ali demanded. I gave him, however, assurances of support which should have been amply sufficient to shew him that he would be defended in the event of an unprovoked attack.

24. This being the history of the negotiations of 1873, which I have drawn up after reading again all the documents, despatches and letters in my possession relating to it, I must express my great surprise at the account given by Lord Cranbrook of those transactions, in his despatch to Lord Lytton of the 18th of November. That account is as follows:—

“8. The policy of his predecessors was that substantially followed by Lord Northbrook, although the rapid development of events in Central Asia was gradually increasing the difficulty of abstaining from closer relations with the Ruler of Cabul. The capture of Khiva by the forces of the Czar in the spring of 1873, and the total subordination of that Khanate to Russia, caused Shere Ali considerable alarm, and led him to question the value of the pledges with reference to Afghanistan which had been given by His Imperial Majesty to England, and which had been communicated to His Highness by the British Government. Actuated by his fears on this score, His Highness sent a special Envoy to Simla in the summer of that year, charged with the duty of expressing them to the Government of India.

“9. Finding that the object of the Ameer was to ascertain definitely how far he might rely on the help of the British Government if his territories were threatened by Russia, Lord Northbrook's Government was prepared to assure him that, under certain conditions, the Government of India would assist him to repel unprovoked aggression. But Her Majesty's Government at home did not share His Highness's apprehension, and the Viceroy ultimately informed the Ameer that the discussion of the question would be best postponed to a more convenient season.”

This statement appears to imply, and, indeed, has been understood to imply, that I wished to give to Shere Ali certain assurances of protection, but that I did not give them because I was over-ruled by the Home Government. This is entirely incorrect. I did give the assurances of protection which I wished to give; and, so far from having been over-ruled by the Home Government, I gave the assurances in consequence of the reply which I received from the Duke of Argyll to my telegram, asking for authority to give them, and in almost the very words which I had suggested. The real history of the transaction is that the Ameer wished for an unconditional guarantee of protection; although I wished to give him, and did give him, a guarantee with reasonable conditions attached to it, I did not wish to give him an unconditional guarantee, and I did not ask for authority to give him such a guarantee.

25. The negotiations of 1873 were reported to the Home Government in September. In February, 1874, there was a change of Government, and Mr. Gladstone was succeeded by Mr. Disraeli. The question of the relations of the British Government with Afghanistan, and with Russia in regard to Afghanistan, was raised on the 8th of May, 1874, by Lord Napier and Ettrick. In reply to him, Lord Derby, representing the Government as Foreign Secretary, stated that it would be most impolitic to give an unconditional guarantee of protection to Shere Ali; and, at the same time, used words which were quite sufficient to shew that the Government agreed with the Government of India that we should defend Afghanistan against an unprovoked attack from Russia. As Lord Cranbrook's despatch to Lord Lytton implies

that under Mr. Gladstone's Administration I was prevented from acceding to Shere Ali's request in 1873, and that Lord Lytton in 1876 was authorised to agree to that request, it is not out of place to observe that, during the two years that I was Viceroy under the Administration of Mr. Disraeli, neither in private letters from Lord Salisbury, nor in debates in Parliament, nor in public despatches to the Government of India, was any opinion expressed, or even any hint given, that it would have been right for the Government of India in 1873 to have conceded to the Ameer the unconditional guarantee of protection which he asked, or that Mr. Disraeli's Administration wished me to give him such a guarantee. This is proved by the last despatch on the subject of our relations with Afghanistan which the Government of India had occasion to write before I left India. In that despatch we were obliged to call the attention of the Secretary of State to the law* which precludes the Government of India from giving to a Native State such an unconditional guarantee of protection without the express command of Her Majesty's Government. We said to Lord Salisbury in our despatch of the 18th of January, 1876,

* 33 Geo. III., c. 52.

"Your Lordship will doubtless have read the observations made by the Ameer in May, 1873, and the communications that took place with Synd Noor Mahomed later in the same year on the subject of the protection of Afghanistan. It then appeared that nothing short of a full and unconditional promise of protection against foreign attack would have been satisfactory to the Ameer; consequently in the Viceroy's letter to His Highness of the 6th of September, 1873, the question was deliberately reserved for future consideration. We had no authority then, nor have we received authority since," (It will be remembered that Mr. Disraeli's Government had been for two years in office) "from Her Majesty's Government to give to the Ameer any such unconditional guarantee, and we are of opinion that there are grave reasons against binding the British Government by any such obligation. We are precluded by law from entering into a treaty of this nature without the express command of Her Majesty's Government, and unless such a treaty is accompanied by reciprocal engagements on the part of the Ameer, which seems to us to be inapplicable to the present condition of affairs."

26. Indeed, notwithstanding the implication contained in the 9th paragraph of Lord Cranbrook's despatch, that the Administration of Mr. Gladstone was to blame for not having authorised me to accede to the requests preferred by Shere Ali in 1873 for an unconditional guarantee of protection, not only was no such authority ever given to me by Her Majesty's Government when Mr. Disraeli was Prime Minister, not only was the whole tenor of Lord Salisbury's correspondence with me adverse to such a guarantee, but Lord Cranbrook, in the 12th paragraph of his despatch, relates that while Lord Lytton was instructed "to offer to Shere Ali that same countenance and protection which he had previously solicited at the hands of the Indian Government, it was clearly impossible to enter into any formal engagement in this sense without requiring from the Ameer some substantial proof of his unity of interests with the British Government." That proof was to consist in Shere Ali allowing a "British Agent or Agents access to his territories other than at Cabul itself." The guarantee which Lord Lytton was directed to offer was therefore not unconditional, but subject to the condition of the access of British officers to Afghanistan. This condition was a much more unpalatable one to the Ameer than the obligation to be bound by our advice in his external affairs which I attached to the assurances of protection which I gave the Prime Minister in 1873. The question of sending British officers to Afghanistan was discussed with the Ameer's Prime Minister in 1873, and he gave his opinion that

" Speaking as a friend and in the interests of the British Government, he could not recommend a specific request being made to station British officers in certain places. Such a demand, however friendly the Ameer might be to the British Government, 'would give rise to distrust and misapprehension.' The reasons he gave were that the Afghans were deplorably ignorant, and entertained an idea that a deputation of British Agents is always a precursor to annexation. He also said that there was a strong party in Cabul opposed to the Ameer entering into intimate relations with the British Government."

This opinion was quoted in the despatch of the Government of India of the 19th of November, 1875, and I had previously furnished Lord Salisbury with a copy of it.

27. Not long after the accession of Mr. Disraeli's Government to office in the year 1874, a letter was written by Sir Bartle Frere to Sir John Kaye*, recommending the occupation of Quetta, and that British Agents should be placed at Herat, Balkh, and Candahar. This letter was communicated by Lord Salisbury to Lord Lawrence, who answered it objecting to the arguments and proposals used by Sir Bartle Frere. Those papers were sent to me privately by Lord Salisbury, but they were not communicated officially to the Government of India for consideration. I told Lord Salisbury that I concurred with the views of Lord Lawrence, and as the papers were not communicated officially, no further notice was taken of them.† Early in 1875 the Government of India received a despatch from Lord Salisbury‡ instructing us to enter into negotiations with Shere Ali, for the purpose of placing a British officer at Herat, and perhaps one also at Candahar. We replied by telegraph, on the 18th of February, asking him whether we were to consider the instructions as an order, or whether discretion was left to us, as to time and opportunity. We added that we thought the time and circumstances very unsuitable for taking the initiative. He replied that his instructions contemplated a delay of three or four months.

28. I was then at Calcutta, and intended to go to Delhi in the spring. I accordingly made arrangements to consult, when there, every one who was best able to give an opinion, whether the proposal to place British officers in Afghanistan would be likely to be accepted by Shere Ali. I found that the opinion of them all was that the proposal would be most unpalatable to him, and this opinion, together with the views of the Government of India, was communicated to Lord Salisbury in the summer of 1875.§ We said that—

" 22. If the concurrence of all those who may be supposed to have the means of forming a correct judgment of the sentiments of the Ameer is of any value, we must be prepared to find him most unwilling to receive a British Agent at Herat. On this the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Richard Pollock, Major-General Reynell Taylor, Colonel Munro, and Captain Cavignari, are all agreed, and their views are confirmed -

" *First.*—By those of Nawab Foujdar Khan and Nawab Gholam Hassan Khan, who have successively served as British Agents at Cabul, and who have means of knowing the present sentiments of the Ameer.

" *Second.*—By the opinion of Noor Mahomed Shah, the Cabul Envoy, who, when at Simla in 1873, advised the Foreign Secretary that a specific request should not be preferred to the Ameer for British officers to be stationed within the Afghan dominions.

" *Third.*—By the recent acts of the Ameer in objecting to permit Sir T. D. Forsyth to traverse Balkh on his return journey from Yarkund, and in discouraging Colonel Baker from returning to India from Teheran *via* Cabul.

" 23. Assuming that the Ameer would object to the location of a British Agent at Herat, we are not of opinion that his objection would imply that his intentions have ceased to be loyal towards the British Government. It is true that such an objection, if raised by an European Power, or even by some Asiatic rulers, although it might be justifiable by the principles of

* This letter was published in the *Times* of the 17th of October last, and Lord Lawrence's reply in the *Times* of the 26th of October.

† The longer and more formal memorandum, written by Sir Bartle Frere, on the 11th of January, 1875, and published in the *Times* of the 14th of November last, was neither communicated to the Government of India for consideration, nor privately to me.

‡ Secretary of State to Government of India, No. 2, of January 22nd, 1875.

§ Government of India to Secretary of State, No. 19, of June 7th, 1875.

international law, would evince a disposition but little removed from actual hostility; but the motives of the Ameer cannot, in our opinion, fairly be judged by this standard.

" 24. There can be no reasonable doubt that there still exists a strong party among the Sirdars of Afghanistan opposed to the measure. Although the time which has elapsed since the Afghan war appears to us to be long on account of the succession of Governors-General of India, and the importance of the events that have intervened, there are many persons now living in Afghanistan who were engaged in that war, and whose memory of what took place is probably the more lively from the narrow limits of their thoughts and actions. Those who have had the most intimate acquaintance with Afghanistan have always expressed their opinion that the establishment of complete confidence between the Afghans and the British must be a work of time, and this opinion will be found repeated in the enclosures of this despatch.

" 25. We consider that the reluctance of the Ameer to consent to the presence of British officers in Afghanistan is attributable mainly to the adverse feeling entertained by an influential party in that country to the measure, and to the consequent unpopularity he would incur by consenting to it. His position in Afghanistan is not so secure that he can afford to neglect any strong feeling among an important section of his subjects. He may also be influenced by the possibility of the safety of the officers employed being endangered by the acts of fanatics. This danger was hinted at by both the Sadr-i-Azem and the Ameer, at the time when Sir T. D. Forsyth's return through Afghanistan was discussed in the Cabul Durbar. It was for these reasons that we thought the Ameer's refusal to allow Sir T. D. Forsyth to return through Afghanistan might reasonably be explained without assuming that it was prompted by any unfriendly feeling towards the British Government, and we accordingly abstained from pressing him upon the subject.

" 26. Besides the above reasons there is probably also the apprehension that the permanent location of British officers in Afghanistan would bring to light proceedings which would be condemned by our standard of right and wrong, and might find their way into the public Press, of which the Ameer feels a great dread. We may again refer to the diaries accompanying this despatch as containing illustrations in point. That such apprehensions are not confined to the Ameer of Cabul is evident from the strong feeling which has been expressed by the Maharajah of Cashmere against the appointment of a permanent Resident at His Highness's Court. . . .

" 28. For the attainment of these ends, it is in our opinion essential that the proposed arrangements should have the cordial consent of the Ameer. For the reasons given above, we are of opinion that, if we were to press the question on the Ameer at present, our proposals would in all probability either be refused or accepted with great reluctance.

" 29. If the Ameer should give an unwilling consent, the officers whom we have consulted are agreed that no advantage would be derived from the presence of a British Agent at Herat. . . . Moreover, if the Ameer should represent the risk to which our Agent might be exposed from the acts of fanatics, or persons opposed to the presence of our officers in Afghanistan, and an outrage on the person of the Agent were attempted, we should be subjected to a humiliation for which, under the circumstances, we might not be justified in holding the Afghan Government responsible, and for which, therefore, it would be extremely difficult to obtain satisfaction.

" 30. If the Ameer should refuse, his refusal would impair the influence of the Government of India in Afghanistan. It must either be accepted without any change being made in our present policy towards Afghanistan, in which case the Ameer would be encouraged to act upon other occasions without regard to the wishes of the British Government; or we must treat it as a proof of unfriendly feeling on his part, modify our present policy, retire from our attitude of sympathy, and withdraw our assurances of support. If we are correct in believing that the refusal would not shew the intentions of the Ameer to be disloyal, it would afford no sufficient justification for a change of policy which might throw Afghanistan into the arms of Russia upon the first favourable opportunity. We may also observe that the refusal would weaken the hands of Her Majesty's Government in any future negotiations with Russia, when questions might be raised as to the real value of British influence in Afghanistan.

" 31. After a careful consideration of the information which we have collected as to the disposition of the Ameer, and of the probable result of pressing to accept a British Agent at Herat, we remain of the opinion which we expressed to your Lordship by telegraph on the 18th of February last, that the present time and circumstances are unsuitable for taking the initiative in this matter. We recommend that no immediate pressure be put upon the Ameer, or particular anxiety be shewn by us upon the subject, but that advantage be taken of the first favourable opportunity that his own action or

other circumstances may present, for the purpose of sounding his disposition and of representing to him the benefits which would be derived by Afghanistan from the proposed arrangement. The object in view is, in our judgment, more likely to be attained by taking this course than by assuming the initiative now. In the meantime we shall neglect no opportunity of obtaining full information respecting events in Afghanistan, by such means as may from time to time present themselves."

After expressing an opinion that Shere Ali, although he was not altogether satisfied with our relations with him, felt that his interests were identical with those of British India, that he was seriously alarmed at Russian progress, and relied on our support, we continued:—

"36. If we have formed a correct judgment of the sentiments of the Ameer towards the British Government, the main objects of the policy which was advocated by Lord Canning in the time of Dost Mahomed, which was renewed by Lord Lawrence on the first favourable opportunity that occurred after the death of Dost Mahomed, which was ratified by Lord Mayo at the Umballa Conferences, and which we have since steadily pursued, are secured. We have established friendly relations with Afghanistan; that country is stronger than it has ever been since the days of Dost Mahomed, and our influence is sufficient to prevent the Ameer from aggression upon his neighbours. It is to be regretted that old animosities and other causes have hitherto prevented the establishment of free intercourse between European British subjects and Afghanistan, and the location of British Agents in that country. But we believe that these things will naturally follow in course of time, when our motives are better understood. Their attainment would be hastened by a further advance of Russia in Turkestan, or by any other danger that may threaten the integrity of Afghanistan.

"39. We attach great importance to the moral and material advantages which are derived from maintaining friendly relations with Afghanistan, and we would impress upon Her Majesty's Government our conviction that such relations will best be secured by a steady adherence to the patient and conciliatory policy which has been pursued by the Government of India for many years towards Afghanistan; and by making every reasonable allowance for the difficulties of the Ameer, even if he should be reluctant to accede to the views which we may entertain as to the measures which may be advisable equally for his own interests and for those of British India."

* Secretary of State to Government of India, No. 34, of November 10th, 1875.

29. In the winter of 1875* we received a reply to our letter instructing us to press the Ameer to agree to the location of British officers in Afghanistan. In that reply the reasons which we had given appeared to us to have been misunderstood; the course which Lord Salisbury directed us to follow seemed to us to be unwise; the instructions were deficient in several important particulars; and the policy which Lord Salisbury directed us to pursue appeared to be so certain, if any weight was to be attached to the opinion of those who were best qualified to judge of the sentiments of Shere Ali, to lead to serious difficulties, that we considered it to be our duty to make a further remonstrance, and to apply for further instructions before carrying into effect the orders which we had received. Our views were contained in a despatch written on the 28th of January, 1876.† After pointing out several important particulars in which Lord Salisbury had misapprehended the opinions we had expressed in our former despatch on the subject, and explaining the nature of the further instructions which were necessary to enable us to enter into negotiations with Shere Ali, we concluded in the following language:—

"25. But the matter is, in our own judgment and in that of all those whom we have been able to consult, of such grave importance that we feel it to be our duty to add some further remarks for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, in the hope that the whole question may still be reconsidered.

"26. It is in the highest degree improbable that the Ameer will yield a hearty consent to the location of British officers in Afghanistan, which the mission is intended to accomplish; and to place our officers on the Ameer's frontier without his hearty consent would, in our opinion, be a most impolitic and dangerous movement. Setting aside the consideration of the

† Government of India to Secretary of State, No. 10, of January 28th, 1876.

personal risk to which, under such circumstances, the Agents would be exposed, and the serious political consequences that would ensue from their being insulted or attacked, their position would be entirely useless. They would be dependent for their information on untrustworthy sources. They would be surrounded by spies, under the pretext of guarding them or administering to their wants. Persons approaching or visiting them would be watched and removed; and though nothing might be done ostensibly which could be complained of as an actual breach of friendship, the Agents would be checked on every hand, and would soon find their position both humiliating and useless. Such was the experience of Major Todd at Herat, in 1839, when his supplies of money failed. Such was the experience of Colonel Lumsden when he went to Candahar in 1857, as the dispenser of a magnificent subsidy.

" 27. A condition of things like this could not exist for any length of time without leading to altered relations, and possibly even in the long run to a rupture with Afghanistan, and thereby defeating the object which Her Majesty's Government have in view. We already see the fruits of the conciliatory policy which has been pursued since 1869, in the consolidation of the Ameer's power and the establishment of a strong government on our frontier. The Ameer's not unnatural dread of our interference in his internal affairs and the difficulties of his position, as described in our despatch of the 7th of June last, combined, perhaps, with the conviction that if ever a struggle for the independence of Afghanistan should come, we must in our own interest help him, may have induced him to assume a colder attitude towards us than we should desire. But we have no reason to believe that he has any desire to prefer the friendship of other Powers. We are convinced that a patient adherence to the policy adopted towards Afghanistan by Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence, and Lord Mayo, which it has been our earnest endeavour to maintain, presents the greatest promise of the eventual establishment of our relations with the Ameer on a satisfactory footing; and we deprecate, as involving serious danger to the peace of Afghanistan and to the interests of the British Empire in India, the execution, under present circumstances, of the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's despatch."

30. In April, 1876, I was succeeded by Lord Lytton in the office of Governor-General. It appears from the despatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State of the 23rd of March, 1877,* on the affairs of Khelat, that Lord Lytton

* Parliamentary paper, Biluohistan, No. 2, 1877, page 356.

"Having had the advantage, before leaving England, of personal communication with Lord Salisbury on the general subject of our frontier relations, was strongly impressed with the importance of endeavouring to deal with them simultaneously, as indivisible parts of a single Imperial question, mainly dependent for its solution on the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, which is the ultimate guardian of the whole British Empire, rather than as isolated local matters."

When I saw him at Calcutta Lord Lytton did not consult me upon the subject of our relations with Afghanistan, and in the account which I shall proceed to give of what I believe to have taken place since I left India, I have derived my information for the most part from Lord Cranbrook's despatch to Lord Lytton of the 18th of November.

31. Lord Lytton brought out with him instructions to negotiate with Shere Ali for the reception of British Residents in certain places in Afghanistan. In return for this he was authorised to concede to the Ameer

"Substantial pecuniary aid, a formal recognition of his dynasty, so far as it would not involve active interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and an explicit pledge of material support in case of unprovoked foreign aggression."

In May, 1876, Lord Lytton requested the Ameer to receive Sir Lewis Pelly at Cabul, not as a Resident Envoy, but for the purpose of entering into negotiations. The Ameer declined to receive Sir Lewis Pelly, and until his letter is made public I can offer no opinion as to his reasons. On the refusal of the Ameer to receive Sir Lewis Pelly, Lord Lytton addressed to him

* The dates of these letters are not stated in Lord Cranbrook's despatch, but they are given in a telegram from the correspondent of the *Standard*, November 9th.

a second letter in July.* The contents of that letter are important, and it is essential, in order to form a right opinion of the present position of affairs, that it should be produced. My impression is that it was written in terms which must have led the Ameer to suppose that our policy had been changed with regard to him. The description of it given by Lord Cranbrook is that Lord Lytton

"Exhorted the Ameer to consider seriously the consequences of an attitude which might end in compelling the British Government to look upon him as a Prince who voluntarily desired to isolate his interests from those of the British Government,"

and this was nothing less than a threat. At the suggestion of the Ameer, the Native British Agent at his Court was then summoned to Simla, and he afterwards returned to Cabul. It is essential to know what instructions he carried back with him. Lord Cranbrook's despatch gives a short account of the instructions, but they ought to be published together with the "clearly worded *aide-mémoire*" with which he was furnished. The result of his communications with Shere Ali was that, in the winter of 1876-77, negotiations took place between the Prime Minister of the Ameer and Sir Lewis Pelly at Peshawur.

32. In the meantime other circumstances occurred which must have had a very considerable influence upon the mind of the Ameer and upon the result of the negotiations, but to which no allusion is made in Lord Cranbrook's despatch. Lord Lytton, after leaving Simla in the autumn of 1876, had an interview with the Maharajah of Cashmere, and it has been asserted by Lord Lawrence, and I believe truly, that arms were supplied to the Maharajah, "with instructions to push forward troops for the occupation of the passes leading to Chitral,"† on the North-Eastern frontier of Afghanistan. In October, 1876,‡ Lord Lytton determined to occupy the post of Quetta, "an important strategical position commanding the richest and most important valleys of Upper Beloochistan, as well as the great trade routes both through the Bolan and to Khelat."§ Quetta is situated on the borders of Afghanistan, and is admirably calculated to form a base of any hostile operations which the British Government might desire to take against that country. In the same winter of 1876 preparations were made for the movement of troops from Rawulpindee, and a bridge was thrown across the River Indus at Kooshalghur, the most direct line by which an advance might be made against Cabul.

33. On the 1st of January, 1877, the announcement of the assumption by the Queen of the title of Empress of India was made in great state at Delhi, and I believe that the Ameer of Cabul was invited to attend at that ceremony. This is not mentioned by Lord Cranbrook, and, if true, was, in my opinion, most injudicious, for it would, under the circumstances, have been interpreted by the Ameer as a desire to place him in the position of the Native Subordinate to the British Government. Neither he nor his Prime Minister, however, actually attended, and the negotiations between the latter and Sir Lewis Pelly commenced on the 27th of January, 1877, at Peshawur, and lasted for about six weeks.

The *sine qua non* of the negotiations was the acceptance by the Ameer, before the discussion of any other matters, of British officers to be stationed at Herat, and in other places in Afghanistan. It appears from Lord Cranbrook's despatch that a

† Lord Lawrence's letters in the *Times* of the 22nd and 30th of October.

‡ Captain Scott received instructions on the 16th of October to mark out barracks, etc., at Quetta, and arrived there on the 2nd of November. Parliamentary papers, Biluchistan, No. 2, page 324.

§ Government of India to Secretary of State, March 23rd, 1877. Parliamentary papers, Biluchistan, No. 2, 1877, page 361.

treaty was to be negotiated, and the draft of it should be produced, in order to shew what demands were to be made upon the Ameer, and what he was to receive in return. After a few weeks it became known that the negotiations at Peshawur had failed. I believe that the Prime Minister, after much hesitation, and having at last been driven into a corner, told Sir Lewis Pelly that the Ameer would not agree to the location of British officers in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister died shortly afterwards, but Lord Cranbrook states that the bases of the negotiations had previously "been practically rejected." The Native British Agent who had hitherto been stationed at the Court of the Ameer was then withdrawn,* and neither he nor any other Native Agent has since been sent to Cabul. It has been stated in the newspapers that about that time, or after the receipt of Lord Lytton's letter of July, Shere Ali shewed great hostility to the British Government, and that he proclaimed a "Jehad," or religious war, against us.

* This is not mentioned in Lord Cranbrook's despatch.

34. Between the transactions of which I have given what I believe to be a correct account, but which cannot be fully known until authentic accounts are produced, and the reception of a Russian Mission by Shere Ali, there was an interval of more than a year. The negotiations at Peshawur were concluded in February, 1877, and the Russian Mission arrived at Cabul on the 22nd of July, 1878. During that time, so far as I know, no communications passed between the Government of India and the Ameer. The British Government maintained, in Lord Cranbrook's words, "an attitude of vigilant reserve." We had, in fact, suspended diplomatic relations with the Ameer, and were on the verge of war with him before the incident of the reception of the Russian Mission and the refusal to receive our Mission occurred. Lord Lawrence has stated that after the withdrawal of our Agent from Cabul the Government of India prohibited the export of arms into Afghanistan.

35. To sum up shortly my opinion of what has taken place, I should say that from the year 1868 to 1876 a policy of friendship and forbearance was shewn by the British Government to Shere Ali; but that after 1876 that policy was changed for a policy of menace and interference. The whole course of proceedings must have led the Ameer to suppose, and not without good reason, that it was the intention of the British Government to change the policy which had hitherto been pursued towards him, if not to attack him. For this change I do not consider Lord Lytton is responsible. Lord Lytton has stated that he received his instructions upon the subject before he left England. The responsibility seems to me to rest, not upon the Viceroy, but upon Lord Salisbury and the British Cabinet. Lord Salisbury, as I have shewn in this memorandum, urged the Government of India when I was Viceroy to press Shere Ali to receive British officers in Afghanistan. The Government of India represented to him that in their opinion, and in the opinion of every one whom they had consulted who was competent to form an opinion upon the subject, such a course would be unwise and likely to endanger the friendship between us and the Ameer. He, however, contrary to these opinions, instructed Lord Lytton to do the very thing which the Government of India had protested against. The result, accompanied by other injudicious

proceedings, has been thoroughly to alarm Shere Ali, and to make him believe that instead of supporting him it was our desire to reduce Afghanistan to the position of one of the protected States of British India.

36. It has been said that the present estrangement of the Ameer from our interests has not arisen from what has taken place since the year 1876, but that if Lord Mayo in 1869, or if I in 1873 had shewn greater cordiality to him; if we had granted him the unconditional guarantee of protection for which he wished; if Lord Mayo had given to his heir the guarantee of British support for which he was especially anxious, affairs would have been in a different state; the Ameer would have been our friend instead of suspecting our intentions, and the present difficulties would not have arisen. I am not prepared to say that the feeling of Shere Ali towards the British Government was satisfactory when I left India in 1876; on the contrary, it had occasioned me some anxiety. The opinion of the Government of India of his situation and feelings is fully described in our despatch to Lord Salisbury of June, 1875, which, as expressing our view at a time long before the present difficulties arose, seems to me to be of sufficient importance to be quoted at length. We said :— *

* Government of India to Secretary of State, No. 19, of June 7th, 1875.

“ 33. It is difficult to appreciate the feelings which influence the conduct of the Ameer, Shere Ali, subject as he is to the risk of a revolution at home and apprehensions of attack from abroad. He cannot be expected to comprehend the language of European diplomacy, and his Ministers are imperfectly educated, of limited experience, and doubtful integrity. We believe, however, that he understands that the British Government have no designs of encroaching upon Afghanistan, that he feels that the interests of British India and his own are identical, that he is seriously alarmed at the progress of Russia, and that his main reliance is placed upon British support. His language, after the return of his Envoy, Noor Mahomed Shah, from Simla, in 1873, was certainly far from satisfactory, but we are disposed to attribute it either to his impression that we were so anxious for his support that by assuming an attitude of dissatisfaction he might obtain further assistance from us; or to his disappointment that we did not give him the distinct pledge he asked, that the British Government would protect him under all circumstances against external attack, coupled, perhaps, with his discontent at the result of the Seistan arbitration.

† He was associated with Noor Mahomed in the Seistan arbitration.

“ 34. Sir Richard Pollock, whose intimate acquaintance with Noor Mahomed Shah † gives him the best means of forming a correct judgment of the Simla negotiations, and who, on his return to Peshawur in the beginning of 1874, obtained confidential information as to the sentiments of the Ameer, stated his ‘ conviction that no unfavourable change whatever had occurred in the disposition of His Highness; that he leaned as much as ever on the British Government; and that he (Sir Richard Pollock) could find no symptoms whatever of an inclination on the part of the Ameer, or on the part of those about him, to seek assistance from any other quarter. On the contrary,’ (Sir Richard Pollock adds) ‘ it would appear that he looks with increasing distrust and suspicion on his northern neighbours; while Persia, his only other neighbour worth writing of, is his natural enemy.’ Similar information has been received by us from other sources. We attach but little value to the vague rumours which have reached us from time to time that communications, unknown to the British Government, have passed between the Ameer and Russian officers, or that Russian agents have penetrated Afghanistan. It must not be forgotten that such rumours are frequent in regard to those countries. Similar rumours prevailed with respect to our own communications with Bokhara, and are current even now as to our dealings with the Turkoman tribes, without any foundation in fact.

“ 35. Since the Umballa Conference the Ameer has never shewn any disposition to neglect our advice as to the external relations of Afghanistan. He accepted fully, although with great reluctance, the decision of the British Government in the Seistan arbitration, and we have no reason to doubt that he intends loyally to abide by it.”

37. I believe that our opinion was correct; certainly it was founded upon that of those who were best able to form an accurate

opinion upon the subject, and we expressed a similar opinion in January, 1876. But for the purpose of argument I will assume that we were mistaken, and that Shere Ali entertained greater suspicions of the intentions of the British Government than we supposed. I will admit, moreover, although my opinion is directly to the contrary, that it would have been wise for the Government to have directed Lord Mayo or me to give to Shere Ali all the unconditional guarantee he required; but after all these admissions I hold that the policy which has been pursued since 1876 was most injudicious. I have already shewn that the Governments of Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli did not offer to Shere Ali the unconditional guarantee of protection for which he wished. If Shere Ali was more suspicious of us than the Government of India imagined, if mistakes had been made before the year 1876, it appears to me that no course could have been followed more certain to increase that suspicion and to turn it into hostility than to urge Shere Ali to receive British officers in Afghanistan, when the Government knew that in the opinion of every one who was most competent to form a judgment upon the subject, such demands upon him were likely to be resented and refused. To accompany those demands by menacing language, by the occupation of Quetta, by pushing the Maharajah of Cashmere to advance towards Afghan territory, and by preparing a force which Shere Ali could hardly have supposed had any other object than to attack him, seems to me to have been a course which could have had no other result than to make him believe that an entire change had taken place in our policy towards him, and that he could no longer rely on the assurances of our good-will and of our desire to see Afghanistan strong and independent, which he had received from Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and myself.

NORTHBROOK.

November 23, 1878



OBSERVATIONS ON THE DESPATCH
OF THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
Of the 10th of May, 1877.

The despatch from the Government of India to Lord Salisbury, of the 10th May, 1877, which will be found at page 160 of the Parliamentary papers on Afghanistan, contains in the first 21 paragraphs what is called a "brief recapitulation of our past relations" with Shere Ali, so far as they affect the more recent dealings with him. There is a good deal contained in this account with which I do not concur, and which I cannot accept as presenting an accurate history of the transactions with Shere Ali before Lord Lytton arrived in India. I, therefore, think it will be useful to reprint the paragraphs which are, in my view, calculated to convey inaccurate impressions, and to place, side by side, my remarks upon them. This will shew in what points I think the historical review, given by Lord Lytton, is incorrect.

"Paragraph 3. The only formal obligation still extant between the British Government and the Barackzai Rulers of Afghanistan is the Treaty of the 30th of March, 1855. This Treaty comprises three short articles. The first article established perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government and Dost Mahomed Khan and his heirs; the second pledged the British Government to respect the territories then in His Highness's possession, and never to interfere therein; the third pledged the Dost, his heirs and successors, similarly to respect the territories of the British Government, and to be the friend of its friends, and enemy of its enemies, without any such corresponding obligation on our part. It did not take long to prove the somewhat imperfect character of the Treaty thus contracted. Two years afterwards, on the first occurrence of a crisis affecting British interests in Afghanistan, a much more complete engagement, stipulating for British Agencies in Cabul, Candahar, and Balkh, and granting aid to the Ameer in money and arms, was entered into by Sir John Lawrence and Dost Mahomed. That engagement, though limited to the duration of the war then being waged between the British Government and the Shah of Persia, was declared by Lord Canning to be sound in principle, liberal, and simple; tending to 'redress the somewhat one-sided character of the Treaty of 1855, in which we appeared to take more than we gave;' and His Excellency expressed an earnest hope that, independently of the war in which we were then engaged, the relations of the British Power with Afghanistan might remain upon a permanent footing, similar to that upon which the above-mentioned engagement had placed them."

The reference to Lord Canning appears to imply that he was in favour of establishing British Officers as

Residents in Afghanistan. If this was intended, it is by no means a correct account of Lord Canning's views upon the subject. Mr. Laing, who was a member of Lord Canning's Council, wrote a letter on the subject on 4th November last, which was published in the *Daily News* of the 5th November. He says that "Lord Canning's policy entirely coincided with that which had been advocated by Lord Lawrence in his recent letters to the *Times*," and adds :—" *I recollect hearing Lord Canning explain fully the reasons which led him to prefer a Native to an English Resident at Cabul, even supposing that the Ameer did not object to receive one. They were, shortly, these : that the presence of an English Resident must necessarily tend to involve us in complications with Afghan affairs, which would inevitably lead us on to further interference, and end in our having to withdraw our Envoy, after having alienated the Afghans, or to establish a Protectorate supported by an army, a result which Lord Canning considered would be ruinous to the finances, and most detrimental to the true political interests of our Indian Empire.*" In the last paragraph of the despatch of the Government of India, dated January 28th, 1876 (page 155), we referred to the opinion of Lord Canning, and we supported our reference in a marginal note by giving the date of the Minute, the 6th of February, 1857, in which he expressed that opinion. The marginal note, however, has not been inserted in the papers printed by the Government. Lord Canning's words, in that Minute, were as follows :—" It would be an object to convince that " (the Afghan) " Government, and the people of Afghanistan, that they have nothing to fear from us unless when injury has been done to us, that we are ready to help them whenever they are attacked from without, just as we are now helping them, and that we have no desire to send a single Englishman, armed or unarmed, into their country, except with their own good will."

" *Paragraph 4.* Dost Mahomed Khan was informed, during the course of the negotiations of 1857, that the British Government's support and assistance of him would be conditional on its officers being received in Afghanistan with the countenance and protection of His Highness. They were not, however, to exercise authority, or command, on Afghan territory ; their duty (in the performance of which the Ameer was expected to afford them every facility) being simply to give advice when required, and to obtain all the information needed by our Government. The readiness with which the Ameer and his Sirdars perceived the propriety of this condition was, it is said, remarkable ; and the measure, although not unattended by risk, met with reasonable success. This, at any rate, may be assumed from a careful review of past records, and from the views entertained by the experienced Head of the Mission, then stationed at Candahar, in favour of a renewal, at the present moment, of the policy then adopted."

The opinion expressed that the residence of British Officers in Afghanistan in 1857 met with reasonable

success is diametrically opposed to the opinion expressed by the Government of India, when I was Viceroy, on the 28th January, 1876. In paragraph 26 of that despatch (page 155 of the Parliamentary papers), we quoted the experience of Major Todd, at Herat, in 1839, and of Colonel Lumsden, at Candahar, in 1857, to shew that the position of British Agents in Afghanistan, unless placed there with the cordial and hearty consent of the Ameer, would be both humiliating and useless. Lord Lawrence in the House of Lords, on the 15th of June, 1877, gave the following account of Colonel Lumsden's position at Candahar, in 1857 :—" The old Ameer, Dost Mahommed, received two British officers, and allowed them to go to Kandahar, where they remained so long as they could do so with safety. But the elder of them, the present Sir Harry Lumsden, assured him (Lord Lawrence) that owing to the espionage practised on him at Kandahar, less information was obtainable there than could be got without difficulty at Peshawur "; and there is no man who knows so much of the history and position of that Mission as Lord Lawrence.

" *Paragraph 5.* It must, however, be observed that, although the residence of a British Mission at Cabul formed part of the stipulations agreed to in 1857, this step was not enforced by the British Government. The Dost urged that the Afghan people would view it with dislike; but Sir John Lawrence deemed it more probable that the real motive of this representation was the disinclination of His Highness to let British officers discover the weakness of his rule, or come in contact with disaffected chiefs at his capital. Provision was thereupon made in the Treaty that, whenever the subsidy should cease, and the British officers have been withdrawn from the Ameer's country, a Vakeel, not an European officer, should remain at Cabul on the part of the British Government, and one at Peshawur on the part of the Government of Cabul. The stipulation thus agreed upon has, so far as the British Government is concerned, been tactitly observed, for convenience sake, from that day to this; but it is worthy of remark that the Government of Cabul withdrew its Vakeel from Peshawur in 1858, and has never replaced him by another. With the exception of this last-mentioned provision, the obligations of the Treaty of 1857 were contracted for a special and limited purpose which has long since lapsed with the lapse of time; it fixed the relations of the British Government with the Ruler of Cabul, and their reciprocal obligations, for the duration of the war with Persia; and our only object in referring to it now is to bring to recollection the good feeling of the Afghan Ruler and people, some twenty years ago, in regard to the stationing of British missions in their territory, elsewhere than at Cabul."

I do not think that the account given in this paragraph of the Agreement of 1857 is a correct one. The seventh section of the Agreement is in the following words :—" Whenever the subsidy shall cease, the British Officers shall be withdrawn from the Ameer's country; but at the pleasure of the British Government a Vakil, not a European Officer, shall remain at Cabul." This seems to me to be tantamount to an agreement, on the part of the British Government, that European Officers should not be placed in Afghanistan after

the subsidy had ceased, excepting as the result of some future arrangement with the Ameer.

“ Paragraph 7. That meeting was, however, carried out at Umballa, in March, 1869, by Lord Lawrence’s successor, in a manner which laid the foundation of closer relations between the two neighbouring Powers, and enabled Shere Ali to consolidate his authority on his return to Cabul. The Ameer, in his conferences with the Viceroy, bitterly complained of the one-sided character of the existing treaty relations—those of 1855—between the two Governments, and earnestly solicited an amendment of them. Lord Mayo, however, was precluded, not only by the orders of Her Majesty’s Government, but by his own convictions, from acceding to the wishes of His Highness. The policy of the Viceroy was, in his own words, an ‘intermediate’ one, susceptible of development in proportion to the subsequent consolidation of the Ameer’s authority, and the continued good conduct of His Highness in his dealings with the British Government. In order, however, to meet, in some measure, the wishes of the Ameer, and to give him a tangible proof of the friendship of the British Government, Lord Mayo added a large gift of arms to that of the money already presented to His Highness; he, moreover, handed the Ameer a written assurance that the British Government would assist His Highness in strengthening his Government as circumstances might require, and would view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of His Highness’s rivals to disturb his position as Ruler of Cabul. This document was in no way intended to have the force of a treaty; it was given to the Ameer in compliance with the earnest representations of His Highness that, without such an assurance, he would be unable to return to Cabul; and it is needless to observe that it did not commit the British Government to any unconditional protection of the Ameer, or to any liabilities which were not dependent on his future conduct towards us.”

The version given in this paragraph of the negotiations between Lord Mayo and Shere Ali at Umballa, appears to me to omit the most essential feature of those negotiations, which was that the Ameer went away from the Umballa Conference satisfied with the assurances he had received, although he did not obtain all the assurances he desired. It was the general impression when I was in India that the Ameer returned with a feeling of satisfaction on the whole. Sir John Strachey, than whom no one knew more of Lord Mayo’s views, has distinctly said so in his Minute giving an account of Lord Mayo’s Administration, in the following language:—“The Ameer had come hoping for a fixed annual subsidy; for assistance to be given, not when the British Government might think fit to grant, but when he might think it needful to solicit it; and for a treaty laying the British Government under obligation to support the Afghan Government in any emergency, and not only the Afghan Government generally, but that Government as vested in himself and his direct descendants, and in no others. These hopes he was obliged to abandon; yet he went back to his dominions a contented man. For he carried back with him not only material assistance in money and arms, but an assurance of warm countenance and support such as had never before been given to any ruler in Afghanistan.” When Sir Lewis Pelly, in his negotiations with the Prime Minister of Shere Ali at Peshawur in February, 1877,

endeavoured to make the latter admit that the Ameer was dissatisfied with the result of the Umballa Conference, he entirely failed in doing so, and the long discussion upon the subject which took place on the 5th February, and which will be found on page 199 in the Parliamentary papers, ended with these words from the Prime Minister : “ In my opinion the Ameer returned from Umballa without anxiety.”

Towards the end of this 7th paragraph it is stated that the document given by Lord Mayo to Shere Ali was in no way intended to have the force of a treaty. Such language appears to me to be exceedingly dangerous, especially as it is confirmed by similar language used by Lord Lytton in the letter written under his instructions by Sir Lewis Pelly to the Prime Minister of the Ameer on the 15th March, 1877. In that letter (at page 219 of the Parliamentary papers), after quoting an assurance given by me to the Ameer, Sir Lewis Pelly uses the words, “personal assurance.” An inference might be drawn from the use of this expression, which would be a very dangerous inference indeed in India, namely, that the solemn assurances given by one Viceroy to an Indian Prince are not binding on his successor.

“ *Paragraph 8.* We may here mention that there are undoubted grounds for the conviction expressed to your Lordship in our despatch, No. 19, of the 7th of June, 1875—a conviction since strengthened by reference to persons in Lord Mayo’s confidence, who conversed frequently at Umballa with Shere Ali and his confidential Minister—that a readiness was then manifested on behalf of His Highness to agree to the presence of British Agents at any places in Afghanistan, excepting Cabul itself, on condition of more substantial assistance, and open support, than the British Government was willing to afford him in 1869.”

There is no “conviction,” to the effect stated in this paragraph, expressed in our despatch of 7th June, 1875 (par. 19), which will be found at page 131. After examining into the evidence of the statement that the Ameer, at the Umballa conference, had expressed willingness to receive British Agents anywhere but at Cabul, we reported our conclusion that “on the whole we thought that either the Ameer or his Minister did, in confidential conversations with Captain Grey (the Interpreter), express a readiness to accept the presence of British Agents.” But I am not sure that a comparison of the two conversations of the Ameer’s Minister with Captain Grey (page 173) even justifies the guarded inference at which we then arrived. For although in the first conversation, Captain Grey reports that the Minister said that the Ameer would gladly see an Agent or Engineer Superintendent in Balkh, Herat, or anywhere but actually in Cabul, in the second conversation,

when he was asked whether the Ameer would sanction Native Agents in Afghanistan, he replied that he did not wish to commit himself, and asked, rather anxiously, whether European Agents were intended. A comparison of the conversations leads to the inference that on the first day the Minister said more than he intended or was authorised to say, and that he shewed anxiety to withdraw what he then said, on the following day. The memoranda of Colonel Burne, Dr. Bellew, and Captain Grey himself written years afterwards (p. 173), are of no authority as against the note recorded at the time. But, however this may be, it is certain that the alleged evidence of a feeling on Shere Ali's part in favour of receiving British Agents, is based on confidential conversations, and that it would be improper to base any official communication to the Ameer on such grounds. We pointed this out in paragraph 20 of our despatch of the 7th of June, 1875 (page 132). The discussion of this question would be unnecessary if it had not been raised in the instructions given to Sir Lewis Pelly. Those instructions (par. 7, page 187) contain distinct reference to the incorrect assumption as to the readiness of the Ameer to receive a British Agent in 1869 ; and Sir Lewis Pelly is actually directed to make use of this alleged readiness in his negotiation. I have since received the best possible evidence of the facts of the case. Mr. Seton Karr was Foreign Secretary to the Government of India in 1869, at the time of the Umballa Durbar. He states that he was the bearer of every confidential communication between Lord Mayo and the Ameer, and was present at every interview between them. He gave Lord Lawrence an account of what occurred in a letter dated the 5th of April, 1869, which he has authorised Lord Lawrence to use. In that letter there is the following paragraph :—" He " (Shere Ali) " is told that we don't want British Officers as Residents at Cabul or anywhere else, and he says they would do him harm in the eyes of his people."

" *Paragraph 12.* With these thoughts in his mind, His Highness deputed Syud Noor Mahomed Shah, in the summer of 1873, to wait upon Lord Northbrook, and submit this and other matters to the consideration of the Viceroy. The Envoy's object appeared to be the establishment of an assumption on the part of the Ameer that both Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo had given His Highness unconditional promises of aid in money and arms—an assumption which Lord Northbrook at once refuted, reminding the Envoy that the British Government alone was to be the judge of the propriety of any request for assistance preferred by his master. The Viceroy, finding that the Envoy was instructed by Shere Ali to apply to the British Government for assistance, both present and prospective—the former for the purpose of strengthening the Government of Afghanistan, the latter with the view of meeting the contingency of actual aggression by a foreign power—and learning, moreover, that he was not satisfied with general assurances, telegraphed to Her Majesty's Government for further instructions. On receipt of these he informed Syud Noor Mahomed that it would be the duty of the Ameer, in case of actual or threatened

aggression, to refer the question to the British Government, which would endeavour, by negotiation and by every means in its power, to settle the matter and avert hostilities ; but that, should these endeavours prove fruitless, the British Government was prepared to assure the Ameer that it would afford him assistance in the shape of money and arms, and, in case of necessity, aid him with troops. Lord Northbrook, however, deemed it advisable to avoid giving Syud Noor Mahomed any more definite pledge than this, or to comply with the request preferred by him for a distinct statement by the British Government that, in the event of any aggression on the Ameer's territories, it would consider the aggressor as an enemy to itself."

The impression conveyed in this paragraph, coupled with the preceding one, is that the negotiations of 1873 were originated by the Ameer, and that the sole object of his Prime Minister's coming to Simla in that year was to represent Shere Ali's fears of attack from Russia, and his desire of some specific assurances of support. The same mistake has been made by Lord Cranbrook, in the 8th paragraph of his despatch to Lord Lytton, of the 18th November, 1878 (page 262). The fact is that I commenced the proceedings by requesting Shere Ali to receive a British Officer at Cabul. He, on the other hand, preferred that his Prime Minister should come to Simla in the first instance, and I agreed to his suggestion. The subjects on which I wished to communicate with Shere Ali were the Seistan arbitration, and the acceptance by Russia of the Northern boundary of Afghanistan. The representation which the Ameer desired his Prime Minister to make of his fears of Russian attack was not the direct object of his journey. It is obvious that there is a very great distinction between a special mission being sent by the Ameer for a particular object, and that object being added to the transaction of other business, the discussion of which was originated by me. The account in the 12th paragraph of the assurances given by me to the Prime Minister is correct, but it conveys a very different impression from that given by Lord Cranbrook, in the 9th paragraph of his despatch of the 18th November (page 262).

" *Paragraph 13.* During the presence at Simla of the Afghan Envoy the subject of the location of British Agents in Afghanistan became, as in 1869, a topic of discussion. Our Foreign Secretary suggested the deputation of a British officer, of high standing and in the full confidence of the British Government, to the Court of the Ameer, as the best preventive of the danger apprehended by His Highness; this officer could advise Shere Ali as to the circumstances of each case, and the action which, in cases of emergency, it might be necessary to take till the Government of India could be communicated with; whilst such a measure need not be followed by the location of Russian Agents in Afghanistan, which would be incompatible with the pledges given by Prince Gortchakoff to Her Majesty's Government. The object of the location of British Agents in Afghanistan would, Mr. Aitchison said, be primarily to obtain accurate information on all matters affecting the external relations of Afghanistan, whilst in no way exercising interference in its internal affairs. The Envoy expressed his general concurrence in the principle of some such arrangement, but declined to recommend to the Ameer any specific proposal for giving effect to it, on the ground

that it might occasion mistrust and misapprehension. He suggested, as an alternative, the deputation of a British officer to inspect the western and northern boundaries of Afghanistan, who could enter by Candahar and return by Cabul, and be again deputed to the capital, if necessary, at a later period. Such a course would, he said, familiarise the Ameer and the people of Afghanistan with the idea of receiving a permanent British representative, and eventually effect the desired object."

It is here stated that the Afghan Envoy declined to recommend to the Ameer any specific proposal for the location of British Agents in Afghanistan. The words he used were, that "speaking as a friend, and in the interests both of his own and of the British Government, he could not recommend that a specific request should be preferred to the Ameer for British Officers to be stationed at certain given places." It was a distinct opinion, expressed by him, that it would be unwise for the British Government to press the Ameer to receive those Officers, and as such the Government of India referred to it in the 22nd paragraph of our despatch of the 7th June (page 132).

" *Paragra h 15.* The Envoy left Simla without having obtained the avowed object of his mission. On bidding farewell to those members and officers of the Government of India with whom he had been associated during the course of it, the Syud was profuse in his expressions of personal gratitude for the hospitality of his entertainment, and the courtesy with which he had been treated. But no sooner had he returned to Cabul than it became apparent that his feelings towards the British Government were most unfriendly; and from that time forward his influence in the Cabul Durbar, which we believe to have been considerable, was exerted on every occasion to the prejudice of our relations with the Ameer."

The first line of this paragraph conveys, as before, the incorrect impression that the Mission of the Ameer's Prime Minister to Simla was for the purpose only of representing the desire of the Ameer for further assurances. The statement that the Prime Minister, after his return to Cabul, shewed unfriendly feelings towards the British Government, and that his influence was exerted on every occasion to the prejudice of our relations with the Ameer, appears to me to rest upon very slight authority. So far as I can gather from the papers, it depends entirely upon the statement of our British Native Agent, as recorded in a conversation held at Simla, on the 27th October, 1876 (page 181). The whole tenor of the Conference between Sir Lewis Pelly and the Prime Minister, in 1877, seems to me to shew that he was desirous, if possible, of preserving the British alliance. With regard to the negotiations of 1873, although strongly pressed by Sir Lewis Pelly to admit that the Ameer was dissatisfied with the result of those negotiations, the Prime Minister entirely declined to make any such admission. He gave a fairly accurate account of the negotiations. He said that, at first, the assurances given by me were left obscure as to the nature of the assistance to be afforded to the Ameer,

but that, after certain conferences with the Foreign Secretary, at last "all the subjects were thoroughly discussed, and nothing was left unconsidered." He said, on more than one occasion, that the friendship between the British Government and the Ameer was left undisturbed when I left India, in 1876. The conversations will be found in the Afghanistan papers (pages 203-6).

" Paragraph 16. At the close of the Simla conferences the Viceroy presented the Ameer with £100,000 and 20,000 rifles. But, notwithstanding His Excellency's gifts and assurances, the attitude of the Ameer became increasingly frigid, sullen, and discourteous. His Highness evinced deep disappointment at the result of his Envoy's interviews with the Viceroy. To all appearance, whilst mistrusting our repeated assurances that he had nothing to fear from the rapid and unchecked advance of Russia towards his Asiatic frontier, he had nevertheless persuaded himself that, in any emergency, the British Government would be compelled, by its own interests, to afford him unconditional assistance. Under this impression he seemed to believe that, in the meanwhile, he might with impunity disregard its advice, and reject its offers of conditional protection.

In the last two lines it is said that the Ameer believed that he might, with impunity, disregard the advice of the British Government, and reject its offers of conditional protection. This state of mind on the part of Shere Ali must have arisen since I left India, for there is ample proof in the papers laid before Parliament that he complied with the advice given him by me upon several occasions since the date of the negotiations of 1873, particularly as regards his relations with the Turkomans; and I received no intimation whatever of any inclination on his part to reject the assurances of protection which I had given to him.

" Paragraph 17. The fallacy of these views lay in their erroneous estimate of the political necessities of this Government, which are as adverse to the wholly uncontrolled personal action of any Afghan ruler as they are favourable to the territorial independence of Afghanistan. It may, however, be admitted that the Ameer was at this time led, not altogether without cause, to hope and seek from the British Government evidence more conclusive than he had yet received of its professed regard for his interests. The arms and money denied to His Highness at a time when they might, perhaps, have saved his country and himself from prolonged civil war, were subsequently given to him when his need of them was infinitely less, and his cause for gratitude proportionally small. But the particular form of support which, as the established legitimate Ruler of Afghanistan, he then most needed was again refused him, at the time when, if given, it would have been best appreciated. On the part of the British Government he had seen nothing but extreme caution in committing itself to his support, whilst it lost no opportunity of assuring His Highness of its friendship with Russia and its reliance on her promises. On the part of Russia he saw nothing but a system of aggression on territories neighbouring his border, and a series of pledges unfulfilled. He had been officially informed in 1869 by Lord Mayo that the Government of the Czar would not interfere in Afghanistan, and would recognise as his all the territories then in his possession; and yet he was shortly afterwards beset with communications from General Kauffman which seemed to him inconsistent with this assurance; nor was it till nearly three years afterwards that Russia finally withdrew her strong opposition to the recognition of his authority over a most important portion of his territories. Again the promised restoration of Samarcand by Russia to the Ameer of Bokhara had been formerly announced to him by us, and yet evaded; whilst he found the pledge of the Russian

Government not to annex Khiva virtually disregarded, and the Russian forces firmly established on the Oxus, close to his own frontier."

The statement at the conclusion of this paragraph does not give a correct account of the case. I have drawn up, in a separate paper, an account of the correspondence between General Kauffmann and Shere Ali. I found that General Kauffmann was in the habit of sending, from time to time, letters to the Ameer, and when I was in India there was nothing in these letters inconsistent with the opinion which Lord Mayo had entertained, that they were unobjectionable. Neither he nor I entertained so great a fear of Russia as to be alarmed at friendly letters thus passing between General Kauffmann and the Ameer, and to have taken offence at them would have been altogether inconsistent with what I knew of the relations between England and Russia up to the time when I left India in April, 1876. The reference to the opposition made by Russia to the authority of the Ameer, "over a most important portion of his territories," is not fair to the Russian Government. There was very considerable doubt as to the exact boundary of Afghanistan to the north-east, and I consider that the Russian Government were justified in raising a discussion upon the point. The British Government, on the conclusion of the negotiations, expressed their satisfaction at the acceptance by the Russian Government of the boundary proposed by them. The assertion that the pledge of the Russian Government not to annex Khiva was thoroughly disregarded does not seem to me to be consistent with the facts of the case, and the Russian fort on the Oxus, Petro Alexandrofsk, opposite Khiva, is at least 350 miles from the Afghan frontier. In fact, its establishment cannot have any direct reference to a possible future design on Afghanistan.

"*Paragraph 18.* In such circumstances it is, perhaps, hardly to be wondered at that the assurances given to His Highness by Lord Northbrook in 1873 failed to satisfy the Ameer, or to restore that confidence and good feeling which, for some time previously, had been upon the wane. His reply to Lord Northbrook's letter, submitted to him through his Envoy, was ungracious and evasive. He accorded no further notice to the Viceroy's proposals for sending an officer to inspect his boundaries than the curt statement that he had read and understood them; he hesitated for some time to receive the arms that were sent for his acceptance; and the subsidy of ten lakhs of rupees, lodged to his credit at the Kohat Treasury, he contemptuously rejected. Moreover, in terms positively offensive, he refused to permit any English officer to enter his territories; and peremptorily prohibited Sir D. Forsyth from passing through Cabul on the return of that officer, in the capacity of British Envoy, from Kashgar to India. In his recent interesting narrative of the journey of Syud Yakoob Khan to Russia, Captain Molley reports, and comments on, the prejudicial effect of this unfriendly act upon our position in Kashgar, and our prestige throughout Central Asia. Of such conduct, on the part of the Ameer, the reports received from our Native Agent at Cabul afforded no intelligible explanation. Of the actual condition of affairs in Afghanistan, of the projects and

proceedings of its Ruler, the strength of his military force, the sentiments of his advisers, and the circumstances of his subjects, the Government of India was then without any trustworthy information, or any means of obtaining it. The evidences of a strong irritation in the mind of the Ameer against the British Government were obvious enough; but the true causes of this irritation our Native Agent seemed unable to remove, or even to indicate. It was also sufficiently apparent that, whilst the British Vakeel exercised no influence over the Ameer, the Ameer was exercising considerable influence over the British Vakeel; the tenor of whose correspondence with the Commissioner at Peshawur suggested an impression (which subsequent information proves to have been accurate) that his letters, if not always submitted to the Ameer for approval, were generally written in the sense believed by the writer of them to be in complete accordance with the wishes of His Highness; and that they never contained any intelligence, or the expression of any personal opinion, which could expose him to the Ameer's resentment, if those letters were to fall into the hands of the Cabul Durbar."

The whole of this paragraph, written in May, 1877, and describing events that occurred in 1873 and 1874, when I was Governor-General, does not represent the opinion of the Government of India at the time with respect to the conduct or disposition of the Ameer. Doubtless it represents the opinion of Lord Lytton in May, 1877, but it is probable, at least, that opinions formed and expressed by the Government of India, at the time, are more likely to be accurate than those formed and expressed by their successors at a subsequent period. We considered that we could not fairly object to the refusal of the Ameer to permit Sir Douglas Forsyth to return from Kashgar, through Afghanistan. See paragraph 25 of our despatch of the 7th June (page 132). We gave our opinion of the motives and state of mind of the Ameer in the same despatch, in the 33rd and 34th paragraphs (page 134), and again in our despatch of the 28th January, 1876. We had, what we believed to be, sufficient information of the condition of affairs in Afghanistan, of the projects and proceedings of Shere Ali, of his military forces, of the sentiments of his advisers, and of the circumstances of his subjects. Our opinion upon this, again, was given in our despatch of 7th June, 1875 (page 130), in the tenth and following paragraphs; and as the Secretary of State did not fully understand our opinion, as was shewn in his despatch of the 19th November, 1875, paragraph 2 (page 147), we again expressed it in our despatch of the 28th January, 1876, paragraphs 3 and 4, giving references in the margin to the diaries of our Native Agent, which shewed to our mind conclusively that his reports could not have been seen by the Ameer. The Agent, so far as appears from any evidence that has yet been produced, never failed to supply us with information respecting all events of importance that occurred in Afghanistan. The reference to these diaries is not given in the

despatch as printed in the papers (page 150, paragraph 24).

" Paragraphs 19, 20, and 21. Such was the condition of our relations with Afghanistan when we received your Lordship's despatch [No. 3, 23rd January, 1875], conveying to us the instructions of Her Majesty's Government to take an early opportunity for improving them, if possible, by endeavouring to secure the Ameer's assent to the establishment of a British Agency at Herat. We informed your Lordship that, whilst fully appreciating all the advantages to be anticipated from such an arrangement, we could not disguise from ourselves the practical difficulties of carrying it out; and that, for any immediate attempt to overcome them, the time and circumstances appeared to us inopportune. In fact, the late Viceroy was of opinion that precautionary measures in regard to Afghanistan might be advantageously deferred till the Russian frontier had been pushed on to Merv. It would then, in the opinion of his Excellency, be necessary to give more specific assurances to the Ruler of Afghanistan, and be probably desirable to enter into a treaty engagement with him, followed by the natural consequence of the establishment of British Agencies upon his frontier.

" Your Lordship informed us in reply [No. 34, 19th November, 1875] that it was impossible for Her Majesty's Government to concur in this opinion. If the Russians advanced their frontier to Merv the time would probably have passed when representations to the Ameer could be made with any useful result. The Ameer's reported and very probable disinclination to the establishment of a British Agency in his country might possibly be overcome if His Highness could be convinced of the inability of the British Government to secure the integrity of his dominions without this precautionary condition. At any rate, the attempt was, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, well worth making without further delay, since such delay was unjustified by any prospect of spontaneous change for the better in the ascertained tendency of Central Asian affairs, or any initiative on the part of the Ameer for the improvement of his relations with the British Government. Your Lordship, therefore, renewed the injunction, previously made on the subject of a special mission to Cabul, for the above-mentioned purpose.

" On receipt of the despatch conveying to us this expression of the views of Her Majesty's Government, we asked [No. 10 of 28th January, 1876] your Lordship for further instructions, pointing out that any overtures to Shere Ali, of the kind commended to our adoption, would probably provoke from His Highness counter demands which could not be satisfied without the previous sanction of Her Majesty's Government. All the recent conduct and language of this Prince had pointed to the conclusion that he cared little, or nothing, for such eventual protection of his country as our own political necessities might oblige us, in any case, to afford it against foreign aggression; and that what he really did care to obtain from us was some unconditional pledge of personal and dynastic support to himself and family. On this point we desired to learn the views of Her Majesty's Government before proceeding further. Those views [No. 3A. of 28th February, 1876] were received by us at the hands of the present Viceroy, and immediately commanded our careful consideration. In the main they removed the chief ground of our objection to any step which might have the effect of bringing to a crisis the relations of this Government with the present Ruler of Afghanistan, by informing us that Her Majesty's Government were prepared to enter into a more definite, equilateral, and practical alliance with His Highness. Our consideration of your Lordship's above-mentioned instructions was also influenced to some extent by the information which the present Viceroy was enabled to place before us, after personal conference, not only with Her Majesty's Government, but also with the Russian Ambassador in England on the general circumstances of the situation we were now called upon to deal with. Whilst still alive to the difficulties and risks inseparable from any attempt to enter into closer and more responsible intercourse with a barbarous neighbour, so suspicious, discontented, and untrustworthy as Shere Ali, we certainly could not regard with unconcern the increasing inconvenience, and possible peril, of the extremely ambiguous and uncertain character of our existing relations with him. It was impossible to deny that the practical results of the Afghan policy, patiently pursued by us for several years, were far from satisfactory."

These paragraphs which purport to represent the opinions of the Government of India, as given in our

despatches of the 7th June, 1875, and 20th January, 1876, with reference to the wisdom of entering into negotiations with Sher Ali for the establishment of British Agencies in Afghanistan, altogether fail to convey the opinions which we held upon the subject. More especially, the language of paragraph 21 is calculated to give an entirely incorrect impression of our views. It would appear from that paragraph that we thought that the Ameer would be prepared to accept British Officers in Afghanistan, if he received in return some unconditional pledge of personal and dynastic support for himself and his family. Our despatches, on the contrary, represented our strong opinion that the Ameer could not be induced willingly to agree to the proposal, and we asked for the instructions of Her Majesty's Government in respect to pledges of support, not because we recommended that they should be given, nor because we believed that if they were offered the negotiations would be successful, but because we could not embark in the negotiations without those instructions.

It is quite incorrect to infer, as is done in the paragraph, that the views communicated by the Secretary of State to the Government of India, of 28th February, 1876, would have "removed the chief ground of our objection to any step which might have the effect of bringing to a crisis the relations of this Government with the present Ruler of Afghanistan." Of course I have no pretension to explain what the views of Lord Lytton were, but I can say, without the slightest hesitation, that the objections unanimously entertained by the Government of India in June, 1875, and in January, 1876, were not objections founded upon any minor points, but objections to the policy of endeavouring to force upon the Ameer a measure which, the opinions of every one who had a knowledge of his character, and the evidence afforded by antecedent events, convinced us would be received by him with mistrust and be most probably rejected.

NORTHBROOK.

December 5, 1878.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH RUSSIA.

THIS *précis* is intended to deal only with the communications addressed by the British Government to the Russian Government on the subject of the communications between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali, the movement of Russian troops in Turkestan, and the despatch of the Russian Mission to Cabul.

The papers are placed, as far as possible, in the order which shows what information was in the possession of the Government when they made communications to the Russian Government.

In the references in the margin, *A* signifies the Afghanistan Brown Book, *F* signifies the Foreign Office White Book, entitled "Central Asia No. 1 (1878)."

During the time that Lord Mayo was Viceroy he did everything he could to assure Shere Ali that he had nothing to fear from Russian aggression. The following paragraphs taken from Sir John Strachey's Minute, giving an account of Lord Mayo's administration after his death, shew what Lord Mayo's policy was :—

"The Ameer's reception at Umballa caused at the time considerable excitement in Russia. Exaggerated rumours of all kinds circulated in Central Asia, and were caught up by the Russian Press. Many affected to believe that some secret compact had been entered into with the Ameer to stir up the Chiefs of the countries bordering on the Oxus to resist and repel the advances of Russia. Although these absurd fears were never entertained by the Russian Government, some anxiety was nevertheless exhibited on its part to obtain assurances that the Ameer of Afghanistan would be restrained from molesting the King of Bokhara. An opportunity for frank and friendly explanations presented itself in the Mission of Mr. Forsyth to Russia in the first year of Lord Mayo's Viceroyalty. The full exposition of the peaceful policy that was then made elicited from the Emperor himself a statement that the Russian Government entertained no intention of extending their dominions; that if the idea of conquest were banished from the Ameer's mind there would be peace in Central Asia; and that while the good offices of England should be exerted to dissuade the Ameer from aggression, Russia would similarly use all her influence to restrain Bokhara from transgressing the limits of Afghan territory.

"The friendly interchange of assurances that both nations intend to devote all their influence to introduce peace into the troubled regions of Central Asia has been repeatedly renewed since then between the representative of Her Majesty's Government and the Ministers of Russia, and the fruits of this good understanding have been frequently manifested. To Russian influence on Bokhara was due the prompt withdrawal of a party of Bokhara troops who had crossed the Oxus in the winter of 1869. To the restraining hand kept by Russia on the Afghan refugees in Turkestan is to be attributed the absence of any attempt on their part to shake the throne of the Ameer. When

the most formidable of those refugees, Abdool Rahman,* once openly represented that it would be for the interest of Russia to assist him in conquering the throne of Cabul, General Von Kaufmann replied that hospitality had been afforded him in consideration of his destitute circumstances, and not as an enemy to England, or a pretender to the throne of Cabul. Russia, he said, wished every prosperity to Sher Ali, who had never given her any cause for dissatisfaction. General Von Kaufmann, himself, in the spring of 1870, commenced a direct correspondence, which has been renewed from time to time, and has conveyed to the Ameer assurances of the neighbourly sentiments entertained by the Russian authorities towards the Afghan Government. There is every reason to hope that the permanent definition of the boundaries between Afghanistan and Bokhara, a matter in which Lord Mayo took deep interest, will before long be accomplished with the consent of all who are concerned."

Shere Ali was much troubled when he first received a communication from General Kaufmann, on the 15th of May, 1870, as appears from his letter to the Commissioner of Peshawur. Lord Mayo wrote to Shere Ali, on the 24th of June, to reassure him, saying :—

F. p. 180.

F. p. 185.

"The letter which General von Kaufmann has addressed you contains, as I have already stated, assurances on the part of the Russian Government of their resolution to adhere to this policy of peace; and these letters will, doubtless, be when rightly understood, a source of satisfaction and an additional ground of confidence to your Highness, because they indicate that, so long as you continue the course you have so happily pursued since the visit you honoured me with at Umballa, it is most unlikely that your territories will be disturbed by Russia, or by any tribe or State which may be influenced by the officers of the Emperor.

"My friend, these assurances given by His Imperial Majesty himself—by his Ministers of State—and now by the distinguished General who commands His Majesty's Forces in Russian Turkestan, have given to me unfeigned satisfaction. For in these I see a further and an additional security for that which I so much desire, namely, the permanency of your rule, the complete establishment of your power, and the maintenance of a just, wise, and merciful administration throughout the whole of Afghanistan. Further, it is a matter of great gratification to me that the servants of the Queen, both in England and in India, have by the representations made by them in your behalf to Her Majesty's ally, been enabled to contribute in this important manner to the interests of your Highness and of your State."

And the Government of India explained their views to the Secretary of State as follows, on the 24th of June, 1870, as follows :—

"General Von Kaufmann's communication appears to us to be the result of the instructions which, as reported in your Secretary's Secret letter, dated 6th May, 1870, the Court of St. Petersburg had determined to send to Tashkend, viz., that General Von Kaufmann should make it known everywhere in Central Asia that a perfect understanding exists between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia with reference to the affairs and interests of those countries. In answering the Ameer's letter we have taken the opportunity to explain to him the repeated assurances we have received from the Russian Government of their determination to pursue a peaceful policy in Central Asia. We have also informed him that the letters addressed to him by General Von Kaufmann, containing as they do a renewed expression of this policy to the Ameer himself, will doubtless be, when rightly viewed, a source of satisfaction and an additional ground of confidence to His Highness that, so long as he continues the course he has so happily followed since his meeting with the Viceroy at Umballa, it is most unlikely that his territories will be disturbed by Russia, or by any tribe or State which may be influenced by the officers of the Emperor."

Shere Ali sent General Kaufmann, on the 15th of

* Nephew of Shere Ali, and the most powerful claimant to the throne in the event of his death. He is a refugee in Russian Turkestan.

July, a civil reply, in accordance with Lord Mayo's advice, which General Kaufmann answered on the 20th of December. Shere Ali sent this letter, on the 7th of March, 1871, to Lord Mayo, who wrote to him on the 9th of May :—

“It gives me much pleasure to observe that your reply gave the greatest satisfaction to the Russian Governor-General, and that it has elicited from him a renewed expression of the friendly intentions of his Government.” F. p. 191.

And advised him to send an answer

“Expressing in general terms your gratification at his friendly assurances, and the determination of his Government to cultivate harmonious relations with its neighbours.”

“In December, 1871, Shere Ali received a reply from General Kaufmann, dated 28th October, in which there is the following paragraph:— F. p. 192.

“It has also been ascertained from the Envoy that your eldest son, Mahomed Yakoob Khan, has sought a reconciliation with you. If this is actually the case, I congratulate you on the happy termination of this miserable business. My sympathies have been with you throughout the affair, since the right was on your side; for God favours not a son who rebels against his father, nor do men wish success to such a one.” *

The reconciliation between Mahomed Yakoob Khan and his father, Shere Ali, had been mainly brought about by the influence of Lord Mayo with the latter, and there was nothing in General Kaufmann's remark on the subject to which we had a right to take exception. I had succeeded Lord Mayo as Viceroy, and I wrote to Shere Ali, on the 1st of May, 1872 :—

“Your Highness will learn from these translations that General Kaufmann's letter contained renewed assurances as to the peaceful intentions of the Russian Government, and confirmed the assurances on this subject which the late Viceroy communicated to your Highness in his letter of the 24th June last year.” F. p. 193.

“It is a source of much gratification to me to know that the letter of your Highness to the address of General Kaufmann has elicited so friendly and satisfactory a reply.”

Shere Ali sent a suitable reply, on the 19th of May, to General Kaufmann's letter of the 28th of October.

On the 19th of May, 1872, Shere Ali sent me a letter from General Kaufmann requesting him to receive his nephew, Sekunder Khan, who wished to return to Afghanistan. I had been already in communication with Shere Ali about this nephew, whom he did not wish to receive. F. p. 194.

Shere Ali answered this letter on the 20th of July, but made no reference to Sekunder Khan.

In July, 1872, a letter was received by Shere Ali from General Kaufmann, replying to his letter of the 19th of May, in which a reference is made to the boundary between Afghanistan and Bokhara, which caused Shere Ali some anxiety; and he made F. p. 198.

* From Cabul to Bokhara.

to the British Native Agent at his Court some remarks of the same kind as he had made to Lord Mayo in 1870. At this time the British and Russian Governments were at the point of arriving at an understanding with regard to the Northern Frontier of Afghanistan. Nothing would have been more unwise and incorrect than for me to have given Shere Ali any reason to suppose that the British Government mistrusted the good faith of the Russian Government in the matter, and I therefore replied to Shere Ali, after giving him my view as to the answer he should give to General Kaufmann.

"My friend! since the date of my lamented predecessor's letter to your address of the 24th June, 1870, I have no reason to believe that any change has taken place in the views and policy of the Russian Government. On the contrary, I confidently believe that the assurances given by the Russian Government, of which your Highness was informed in that letter, will be strictly and faithfully adhered to."

The Government of India wrote at the same time to the Secretary of State, expressing our hope that the negotiations with Russia as to the boundary of Afghanistan might soon be concluded.

F. p. 196.

In September, 1872, another letter was received from General Kaufmann, of the same character, as to which the British Agent at Cabul was informed :—

F. p. 202.

"Should His Highness the Ameer allude to these letters, and manifest the apprehensions which his courtiers entertain, the Agent should be instructed to state that the Viceroy and Governor-General, in Council, sees in them no ground whatever for apprehension, but rather additional reason for believing that the Russian authorities desire to maintain none of the relations but those of amity with the Government of Afghanistan."

In forwarding copies of this correspondence to the Secretary of State, we pointed out that it had caused some anxiety to the Ameer, and the Duke of Argyll suggested to the Foreign office that copies of this and future similar correspondence should be sent to Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

F. p. 202.

F. p. 8.

In November, 1873, a copy of a letter from Shere Ali to General Kaufmann, in reply to a letter from him of August 1st, 1873 (which is not included in the papers) was sent me, and in December, 1873, Shere Ali received a letter from General Kaufmann, through the agent of the latter at Bokhara, informing him of the end of the Khivan Campaign.

F. p. 9.

In April, 1874, a letter was received by Shere Ali from the officiating Governor-General at Tashkend. In this letter there is the following passage :—

F. p. 15.

"In your murrasilla of 6th Zilhij you sent information that you had nominated your son, Sirdar Abdoolah Khan, as your heir-apparent; I congratulate you on this selection. Such nominations tend to the comfort and tranquillity of the kingdom. I wish perpetual possession of your kingdom by you and your heirs, and hope that after your death Sirdar Abdoolah Khan will follow your example and make himself an ally and a friend of the Emperor. Your Highness is aware of

the friendly relations which hitherto existed between the British and Russian Governments, but lately these relations have been confirmed by an alliance between the Rulers of these two kingdoms. The daughter of the Emperor has been married to the second son of Her Gracious Majesty the Queen Victoria. I send this happy information to your Highness on account of the friendship existing between your Highness and the Russian Government, and hope that you will consider this relationship advantageous to our friendship with the English Government, who are favourably disposed to you. May God be your protector under all circumstances and keep you happy."

There seems to be some omission in the published papers, for a letter is given from the officiating Governor-General of Turkestan of the 18th of December, 1873, the connection of which with the former correspondence is not apparent. The Government of India did not consider the tone of this letter from General Kolpakofski to the Ameer was right, and called the attention of the Secretary of State to it. The passage is as follows :—

F. p. 16.

"Being charged with the Government of Turkestan during the absence of his Excellency, I consider it my duty to express to you my satisfaction as regards the feelings of friendship and devotion which you set forth in your letter.

"In despatching the same to the High Governor-General for his favourable consideration, I entertain the hope that he will not refuse your request, and that he will represent to His Majesty the Emperor your conscientious mode of action, and your endeavour to become worthy of the grace of my august Master.

We desired the Agent at Cabul to ascertain from Shere Ali what the reference to his request was, and to acquaint him, in case the tone of the letter should have caused him any apprehension, that "the Russian Government had given renewed assurances to Her Majesty's Government that they have no desire to interfere with His Highness's territory."

In August, 1875, Shere Ali summoned the British Native Agent at his Court, and told him that a native of Samarcand, had, as Russian Envoy, crossed the Oxus with a letter. A full account of his reception and entertainment was given by the British Agent, to whom the Ameer gave the letter for perusal as soon as he received it. It contained the announcement of General Kaufmann's return to Turkestan, after an absence of a year-and-a-half, and is as follows :—

F. p. 63.

"I (the Governor-General) remained for about one-and-a-half years at St. Petersburg to settle some matters. Two letters were received from your Highness at that place. In one you announced the appointment of Sirdar Abdoola Khan as your heir apparent, and we were highly gratified. The friendship existing between Russia and Afghanistan will increase and become firm owing to the recent alliance between England and Russia, and I hope that the countries under the protection of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and Her Majesty the Queen will enjoy peace and comfort."

The Envoy returned to Tashkend with a civil answer from the Ameer on the 20th of September.

The last letter which Shere Ali received from General Kaufmann when I was Viceroy was in reply to Shere Ali's letter of the 20th September, and in-

F. p. 67.

F. p. 71. formed him of the result of the Khokand expedition. This letter was despatched by a "messenger of the King of Bokhara," and it was answered by the Ameer on the 3rd of February, 1876.

F. p. 73. I have to remark generally upon these letters, that unless there had been an engagement between the British and Russian Governments that no correspondence whatever should pass between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali, there was nothing in the letters to which exception could be taken, excepting in the particular instance I have mentioned. There was no sign that Shere Ali wished to encourage those communications, on the contrary, he expressed his annoyance at them upon more than one occasion. There was no concealment of the arrival of the letters, of the manner in which they were brought, or of the answers given to them. It has been said in Lord Cranbrook's despatch to Lord Lytton, of the 18th of November, 1878 (paragraph 10, p. 262), that at first Shere Ali sent the letters to the Viceroy, and consulted him as to the reply to be given, but that he had discontinued the practice, and it is implied that this shewed a desire on the part of Shere Ali to intrigue with Russia before 1874, when the present Government came into office. It is correct that he at first sent the letters to the Viceroy, and afterwards he did the same when they were written in Russian, but having received both Lord Mayo's and my advice as to the general character of the answers to be sent to General Kaufmann, there was no need for a special reference in each case. Shere Ali's replies were always communicated to the British Agent. The persons who brought the letters were not Russians, they were natives of Samarkand or Bokhara, and they do not appear to have stayed longer at Cabul than was necessary in order to receive the reply to the letters. In short, there is not the least reason to suppose from the papers, nor had I any suspicion from any private information, that, up to the time I left India in April, 1876, there were any Russian intrigues in Cabul connected with this correspondence, or otherwise.

A. p. 263.

In May 1875, a most important communication was made by Count Schouvaloff to Lord Derby, upon the policy of England and Russia in Central Asia. This was referred to Lord Salisbury on the 26th of May, his opinions were given on the 22nd of June, and a reply conveying the opinions of Her Majesty's Government was sent to the Russian Government on the 25th of October, which was communicated to the Government of India on the 19th of November, and particularly

F p. 25

F p. 40

F p. 43.

F. p. 57.

alluded to in our despatch to the Secretary of State of the 28th of January, 1876, para. 18. In these most serious communications with the Russian Government there is not the slightest allusion to the letters from General Kaufmann to Shere Ali as being objectionable, and if Lord Salisbury had at the time attached any importance to them he would undoubtedly have taken advantage of the opportunity to stop them. In February, 1876, the Emperor of Russia accepted the view adopted by Lord Derby of the position of England and Russia in Asia. On the 12th of May, 1876, Lord A. Loftus writes from St. Petersburg that

A. p. 153.

"The speech of the Prime Minister on Mr. Baillie Cochrane's motion in the House of Commons has given great satisfaction here, not only in the official circles, but also generally among all classes.

F. p. 68.

F. p. 69.

F. p. 73.

"I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship an article published in this morning's *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* from the *Moscow Gazette* (the organ of the Russian press which has hitherto been the least favourably disposed towards England in regard to the affairs of Central Asia), in which, after stating that the frank and firm reply of Mr. Disraeli places the two countries in the position conformable to their dignity, their greatness, and to their mutual interests, it hails with satisfaction the statement that the good understanding between the two Governments had never been more complete than at the present moment.

"It further continues to observe that the mutual concord and confidence of the Great Powers had never been more decisive for the peace of Europe, and it terminates by stating that, in the midst of the general concord, the mutual confidence between England and Russia was an element of decisive value.

"I met General Kaufmann yesterday at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and he expressed to me the pleasure with which he had read Mr. Disraeli's speech, and he expressed a hope that England and Russia would act cordially together in Central Asia for their mutual welfare, and for the advancement of civilization."

The passage in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* was as follows:—

"Maintenant on peut considérer les contestations diplomatiques au sujet de l'Asie Centrale comme ayant définitivement pris fin, et il convient de dire à l'honneur de l'Angleterre que c'est à son libre vouloir et à sa sage modération que nous devons ce résultat. La réponse franche et ferme de M. Disraeli replace de nouveau les deux pays dans la situation mutuelle la plus conforme à leur dignité, à leur grandeur, et aux intérêts de chacun d'eux. Le Chef du Cabinet Britannique dit qu'il ne craint pas la Russie, laquelle, elle non plus, n'avait pas interprété dans le sens d'une menace les explications données au Parlement à l'occasion des débats sur le titre de la Reine. (Nos lecteurs se souviendront, dit à ce sujet la *Gazette de Moscou*, que nous ne nous étions pas mépris en son temps sur la portée des explications de M. Disraeli.) Le Ministre a dit ensuite que la Russie connaît la ferme intention de l'Angleterre de maintenir sa domination aux Indes et son influence en Orient, et que la Russie ne considérerait pas cette politique comme étant incompatible avec une bonne entente entre les deux États; ce qui nous paraît le plus remarquable dans le discours du Ministre, ce sont les paroles suivantes:—

" 'Loin de m'alarmer des progrès de la puissance Russe dans l'Asie Centrale, je ne vois pas de raison pour que la Russie ne conquière point la Tartarie quand l'Angleterre a conquis les Indes. Je désire seulement que le peuple de la Tartarie retire autant d'avantages de la conquête Russe que le peuple Hindou en a retirés de la conquête Anglaise.' "

Unfortunately, however, this amicable understanding between England and Russia, which I have shewn to have been maintained until after I left India in April, 1876, and which was most advantageous for

the interests of British India, and for those of Russia in Asia, was interrupted by the rebound upon Asiatic politics of the antagonism between England and Russia upon the Turkish question in Europe.

I do not intend to enter upon any discussion of that question. It is enough to remember that the speech of the Prime Minister in November, 1876, at the Lord Mayor's dinner, contained little less than a menace to Russia, and although during the Conference at Constantinople, in the winter of 1876-77, a different position was assumed by Lord Salisbury, the former policy was resumed by the British Cabinet upon his return, and in the autumn of 1877, it was supposed, that England was on the point of interfering by arms in favour of Turkey. Lastly, in the spring of 1878, before Russia had agreed to the Berlin Conference, so critical was the state of affairs that Indian troops were sent to Malta, and England and Russia were on the verge of war.

It is essential to bear this state of affairs in mind, in order to interpret rightly the occurrences in Afghanistan towards the end of 1876.

F. p. 75.

On the 17th of July, 1876, the Government of India sent, in the ordinary manner, to the Secretary of State a report which they had received from the British Native Agent at Cabul of a letter purporting to come from General Kaufmann to Shere Ali, on the subject of the conquest of Khokand. My impression from its contents is that this letter, which is a very long one, was not written by General Kaufmann, but by some other officer, especially as General Kaufmann had already, in February, 1876, announced to Shere Ali the conquest of Khokand

F. p. 75.

F. p. 79.

This despatch was sent without remark by Lord Salisbury to the Foreign Office, and transmitted, on the 6th of September, by Lord Derby to Lord A. Loftus, also without remark.

But on the 16th of September (two months after their first letter), the Government of India telegraphed to the Secretary of State :—

“We send you a despatch by this next mail, expressing decided opinion on necessity of Her Majesty's Government remonstrating with Russia on Kaufmann's repeated correspondence with Ameer by hand of Russian agents, two of whom are now in Cabul.

“Although hitherto the Government of India have not asked Her Majesty's Government to formally remonstrate on this open breach of repeated pledges, we now deem it necessary to request you to do so, as the correspondence is creating much sensation at Cabul and forms basis of intrigue which may seriously impair our relations with Ameer.

“We will on our part take earliest favourable opportunity of co-operating with any action you may deem expedient to impress on Ameer risk he runs and necessity for his stopping reception of these intriguing agents.